# 'My Own Crazy Carcase': The Life and Works of Dr George Cheyne (1672-1743)

**David E. Shuttleton**

**Ph.D**
**University of Edinburgh**
**1992**

# Contents

# Abstract

This thesis represents the first full length study of the life and works of Dr George Cheyne (1672-1743). The introduction reviews earlier studies. The biographical content provides a substantial amount of new information derived from neglected printed sources and unrecorded archive material. An interdisciplinary approach is taken in an attempt to illustrate the close, if complex, connection between Cheyne's biography and the development of his medico-religious ideas. Particular attention is given to the role of Cheyne's engagement with Christian mysticism in shaping his promotion of notions of sensibility amongst the Georgian *literati*.

There are ten chapters. Chapters one and two trace Cheyne's origins in Aberdeenshire, and his emergence at Edinburgh in 1700 as the controversial champion of the iatro-mathematical medical theories of Dr Archibald Pitcairne. An account of Cheyne's early years in England examines his mathematical collaboration with John Craige, and his failure to impress Newton with the publication of The Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion (1705). Chapter three examines Cheyne's crucial breakdown in 1704-6 and his rejection of 'Natural Religion' in favour of sentimental pietism. It provides a detailed account of the unorthodox pietist sects (many with close links to the Continent), with whom Cheyne became associated. Chapter four analyses Cheyne's millenarianism: whilst the Camisard Prophets focused his interest on the relationship between nervous illness and spiritual illumination, his quietist-mysticism was a recoil from such 'Enthusiasm'. Chapter 5 argues that the enlarged Philosophical Principles of Religion: Natural and Reveal'd (1715), was a widely used academic textbook, despite the unorthodox 'mystical' colouring it gained when Cheyne attempted to reconcile a Newtonian theodicy with Behmenism. Chapter six records Cheyne rise to fame as a controversial Bath physician, specialising in nervous complaints, and considers the reception of his Essay of Health and Long Life (1724). Chapter seven discusses Cheyne's second breakdown, and The English Malady (1733), contextualizing his attack on 'Luxury' and his formulation of a determinist notion of sensibility. Chapter eight is an account of Cheyne's circle of the 1730s, which included Chevalier Ramsay, Nathaniel Hooke, John Byrom, the Wesleys, Lady Huntingdon, and David Hartley. It is argued that although Cheyne influenced the founders of Methodism, his more intellectual pietism was developed by William Law and a loose network of theosophers, who promoted proto-Romantic concepts of 'Spiritual Nature'. Chapter nine discusses Samuel Richardson's involvement in the pre-publication of Cheyne's last two works, his *Magnum Opus*, in which he presented his mature theodicy. It is argued that Cheyne influenced Pope's millennial concern in The New Dunciad (1742). With brief references to Sterne, Fielding and Graves, attention is given to Cheyne's selfconsciously quixotic role as an 'amiable humorist'. The final Chapter examines Cheyne's relations with Samuel Richardson. A conclusion records Cheyne's death and maintains that his paradoxical career continues to challenge established notions of the intellectual history of the period.

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank The British Academy for awarding me a Scholarship for Postgraduate Studies in the Humanities, without which this thesis would not have been possible. I also thank Dr Ian Bell for inspiring my interest in the eighteenth century as my undergraduate tutor, and for his subsequent friendly support. Thanks also go to my original supervisor Dr John V. Price (retired), for helping this thesis get off the ground and for all his guidance. I must also thank my supervisor, Mr Geoffrey Carnall, whose interest and encouragement has been invaluable in bringing this thesis to fruition. I am grateful to the many librarians and archivists who have been invariably patient when dealing with my sometimes obscure demands; in particular Dr Tristram Clarke. I must thank the Duke of Roxburgh, Lord Haddington and Lady McEwen for granting me access to manuscripts in their possession, and the latter in particular for her interest and hospitality. My thanks do not extend to the person who stole some of Cheyne's letters whilst I was in the middle of transcribing them! However, I do wish to thank Dr Hillel Schwartz in America who was kind enough to trace a unique microfilm of them and send a copy to Scotland. I also wish to thank my many friends, both in and outside academia, who have offered their moral support; in particular Mike Barfoot and Chris Fletcher. A very special thanks goes to my good friend (Dr) Bill Zachs for his inestimable good humour and encouragement. Above all I must thank Will for his patient support and companionship throughout.

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work,

# Abbreviations

## Printed Sources

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| PP (1705) | George Cheyne | Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion (1705) |
| PP (1715) | George Cheyne | Philosophical Principles of Religion: Natural and Reveal'd (1715) |
| EH | George Cheyne | An Essay of Health and Long Life (1724) |
| EM | George Cheyne | The English Malady (1733) |
| ER | George Cheyne | An Essay on Regimen (1740) |
| NM | George Cheyne | The Natural Method of Cureing the Diseases of the Body etc.(1742) |
| Mullett Letters | | The Letters of Dr George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson (1733-1743) ed. with an introduction by Charles F. Mullett (University of Missouri, Columbia, 1943) |
| Mullett Letters (Hastings) | | The Letters of Dr George Cheyne to the Countess of Huntingdon ed. with an introduction by Charles F. Mullett (Huntingdon Library, San Marino, 1940) |
| Pope Corr | | The Correspondence of Alexander Pope ed. by George Sherburn, 5 volumes, (Oxford, 1956) |
| Rousseau *IDC* | | G. S. Rousseau, *Mysticism and Millenarianism 'Immortal Doctor Cheyne'* in Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought 1650-1800 Clark Library Lectures, ed. by Richard H. Popkin (Brill, 1988), pp. 81-126. |
| ELH | | English Literary History |
| GM | | The Gentleman's Magazine |
| JHI | | The Journal of the History of Ideas |
| DNB | | Dictionary of National Biography |
| DSB | | Dictionary of Scientific Biography |

## Archival Sources

| | |
|---|---|
| BL | The British Library |
| BOD | The Bodleian Library |
| NLS | The National Library of Scotland |
| PRO | Public Records Office, London |
| SRO | Scottish Records Office, Edinburgh |
| EUL | Edinburgh University Library |
| BCL | Bristol Central Library |
| Mellerstain | Mellerstain House Archive, Berwickshire |

# Introduction

This thesis is a biographical and critical study of the medico-religionist, George Cheyne M.D., F.R.S., (1672-1743). Cheyne is best known to literary scholars as the author of The English Malady (1733), the most influential early Georgian account of nervous disorders, which served to popularise a cluster of ideas relating to physiological determinism, piety and privilege informing the 'Cult of Sensibility'. Cheyne had wide scholarly interests and his works demand an inter-disciplinary approach in so far as they tend to defy modern academic distinctions between science, theology, anthropology, philosophy, ethics, psychology and literature. The English Malady was only the most prominent of his influential, self-revelatory works which found their way into the libraries of a remarkable number of prominent literati, philosophers, politicians, and religionists. By the 1720s he was at the centre of a fashionable cult of 'Disciples' who upheld his pious, sentimental doctrines of temperance and simplicity of heart. On a practical level many adopted his controversial ascetic regimens, based primarily upon a 'Milk and Seed Diet' as the means to physical and spiritual well-being. These were based on his own experimental attempts to cure his 'own crazy Carcase', which at one stage expanded to a phenomenal 34 stone! Such diverse figures as Pope, Hume, Chesterfield, Richardson, Fielding, Young, Johnson, Boswell, Mrs Thrale, Mather, the Wesleys, the Countess of Huntingdon, Hartley, Thomson, and Shelley are amongst those to be encountered in any account of how Cheyne's medico-religious ideas became common currency to be attested or contested amongst an anxious Georgian intelligentsia seeking relief from both physical and mental *dis-ease*.

Research for this thesis began in 1985 at a time of increasing interest in Cheyne amongst literary scholars. It was my own concern to understand the full significance of Cheyne's extant correspondence with Samuel Richardson which prompted my interest, but Cheyne emerged a subject who demanded to be studied as much upon his own terms and not merely as a supposedly eccentric silhouette standing in the cultural wings of the Augustan stage. But as Cheyne is coaxed from the shadows, literary critics and cultural historians alike have been dependent upon fragmentary, sometimes inaccurate biographical accounts. It is to be regretted that some factual errors have been repeated in very recent studies. The primary aim of this thesis has been to correct such inaccuracies and clarify our picture of Cheyne with the fruits of new research.

The basic and often sketchy biographical information provided in Cheyne's own published works, and in the numerous notices which appeared in the century after his death w ere collated anonymously by the Revd. W. H. Greenwood in his short, but useful Life of George Cheyne, M. D. (Oxford, 1846). Cheyne's medical career was largely ignored by late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century 'Whig' historians of science obsessed with originality. On their analysis the early eighteenth century appeared a fallow period for medical progress. Since Cheyne made no major anatomical or clinical discoveries, and practiced largely outwith established professional institutions, he remained virtually invisible. As a consequence the few anecdotal portraits of Cheyne from this period are both derivative and invariably blind or patronising towards his significant theological and metaphysical concerns. Two late exceptions which provide a few fresh biographical details are John M. Bulloch's patriotic *An Aberdeen Falstaff: Dr George Cheyne our Double M.D.* (Aberdeen, 1930), and H. R. Viets's *George Cheyne, 1673-1743* Bulletin of the History of Medicine XLVIII (1949).

In the present century Cheyne has drawn attention from three main disciplinary camps; namely, historians of science (specifically of Newtonianism), historians of medicine, and literary scholars. In the first catagory we should note Hélène Metzger, who considered Cheyne's 'unorthodox' interpretations of Newtonian theories of attraction in her Attraction Universelle et Religion Naturelle chez Quelques Commentatuers Anglais a Newton (Paris, 1938). Her work was developed by Geoffrey Bowles, in a significant article entitled *Physical, Human, and Divine Attraction in the Life and Thought of George Cheyne*, Annals of Science, 31 (November, 1974). Bowles was the first to show the intimate relationship between Cheyne's shifting metaphysical ideas and the circumstances of his life. Following Metzger, Bowles described Cheyne as a 'Newtonian Heretic' who adhered to what, for want of an adequate label, is described as an anachronistic Neo-Platonism.

Cheyne's fortunes began to revive amongst historians of medicine in the 1970s and 80s. Lester M. King began to address Cheyne's wider role as a medical philosopher in *George Cheyne: Mirror of Eighteenth-Century Medicine* Bulletin of the History of Medicine XLVIII (1974), where he argues that although he 'did not change the course of medical history...his voluminous writings represent well the intellectual activity of the era' (p. 518). Some of the earlier simplifications regarding Cheyne's place in a Newtonian tradition have been challenged in the more recent work of the medical historian, Anita Guerrini. She has examined Cheyne's early career as a 'Newtonian' iatro-mechanical medical theorist in several substantial, if

overlapping articles.[1] Her work so far has served to define Cheyne's precise place within the circle of 'Tory Newtonians' who purported to apply Newton's methods to medical theory during the opening decades of the eighteenth-century. But her concentration upon Cheyne's early career and upon the minutae of his engagement with Newtonian matter-theory, has largely been to the exclusion of any substantial, wider consideration of his work as a theologian, metaphysician, pietist or associate of the literati. In particular Guerrini's early essays show no awareness of Cheyne's engagement with theosophy and other forms of Christian mysticism, and do not discuss the important quietist network in which he was closely involved from at least 1708. In her most recent account she acknowledges, but underplays the significance of Cheyne's pietism.[2]

Cheyne's particular concern with nervous illness has been contextualised by Roy Porter in his substantial study Mind Forg'd Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency (1987). Here, and in the related essay *The Rage of Party: A Glorious Revolution in English Psychiatry* Medical History 27 (1983), Porter has argued for Cheyne's central position within the pre-history of psychiatry. He places Cheyne within an essentially 'Whig' tradition of enlightened Georgian 'nerve doctors', who presented a sympathetic account of nervous disorders as the curable symptoms of physical dysfunction of the body perceived as a machine. He has argued that Cheyne's patriotic account of 'sensibility' as a badge of refinement or 'the English Malady' , did not amount to a radical attack on an expanding mercantile culture, but rather, it served to reassure the victims of Luxury that their discomfort was a just price for the advancement of civilisation. As a direct consequence Porter has very recently edited and introduced the first modern reprint of The English Malady (1991), which he presents as a *locus classicus* of eighteenth-century notions of nervous sensibility.[3]

Cheyne's importance for literary historians of a 'nervous' eighteenth-century was recognised as far back as 1926 by Oswald Doughty in his essay on *The English Malady of the Eighteenth Century* (Review of English Studies, II, 7), but Cheyne only drew any substantial attention from critics after the 1940s when the American scholar Charles F. Mullett edited and introduced Cheyne's extant letters to Samuel Richardson

---

[1] Full list in Bibliography.

[2] Guerrini *Isaac Newton, George Cheyne and the 'Principia Medicinae'* in The Medical Revol ution of the Seventeenth Century ed. by Andrew Wear and Roger French (Cambridge, 1989). I have not traced an essay 'Ether Madness'.

[3] George Cheyne The English Malady (Tavistock Classics in the History of Psychiatry) ed. by Roy Porter (Routledge, 1991),. appeared when this thesis was in a very late stage of editing, but some re-writing to give attention to Porter's introduction was carried out in Chapter 7. All my original references to the first edition can be equally applied to this facsimile.

and the Countess of Huntingdon.[4] Regrettably Mullett's valuable work was severely hampered by the impossibility of pursuing research on references in war-time Britain. In 1953 C. A. Moore established Cheyne's influential role as a propagator of concepts of nervous sensibility amongst the literati in his essay *The English Malady* in Backgrounds of English Literature, 1700-1760 (Minnesota, 1953), which remained a standard account for many years. As a consequence Cheyne began to be mentioned in more substantial studies of literature and madness (or melancholia), such as Max Byrd's Visits to Bedlam (Columbia, 1974). The best overview of these accounts is to be found in the final chapter of John Mullan's recent monograph Sentiment and Sociability: the Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, 1988).

But it is Prof. G. S. Rousseau, in particular who has championed Cheyne's importance for literary historians in his interdisciplinary work on literature, science and the history of sensibility, published over the last fifteen years.[5] The figure of Cheyne to emerge in Rousseau's culminating essay *Mysticism and Millenarianism: 'Immortal Doctor Cheyne'* in Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought 1650-1800: Clark Library Lectures, 1981-82 edited by Richard H. Popkin (Brill, 1988), is in marked contrast to that painted by Guerrini and, to some extent, Porter. As his title suggests, Rousseau is the first to highlight Cheyne's mystical and millenialist concerns and to argue that they are integral to any attempt to understand his place on the intellectual map of the Enlightenement. Whilst Prof. Rousseau makes a brave effort to address many previously neglected biographical sources in an extended-essay form, his account is flawed by some inaccuracies; but then he does declare from the outset that 'need exists for a detailed scholarly biography'.* Nevertheless his account furthers Cheyne studies in two significant directions. Firstly it illustrates the inadequacies of previous accounts, especially in their failure to engage with Cheyne's religious thought. Secondly, Rousseau argues that once we begin to piece together Cheyne's complex and sometimes apparently paradoxical biography, the results challenge many received ideas about the intellectual history of the early Georgian period. His essay closes with several rhetorical questions regarding how we are to label Cheyne's many roles as metaphysician, fashionable doctor, wit and mystical evangelist. With previous accounts in mind, Rousseau comments:

---

[4] See Bibliography and Abbreviations List.

[5] See Bibliography for these essays. Rousseau's three companion volumes of retrospective essays Enlightenment Crossing, Perilous Enlightenment, and Enlightenment Borders (Manchester University Press, Spring, 1992), appeared as this thesis was being proofread. All the relevant articles mentioned in my thesis are reprinted, but references are to the original appearance as it would be a massive task to compare for revisions.

* p. 82 n. 2.

> Cheyne's death in the early 1740s has been said to make of him a transitional figure; his career-the argument goes-lies in "the boundary" of a vast continental shift between apparently opposed sets of values. But these are not merely the differences of Neoclassicism and Romanticism, Mechanism and Vitalism (Animism), or Mechanism and Organicism. Cheyne's mysticism deserves to be studied precisely because of the way in which it accommodates iatromechanism, Newtonianism and Animism. A close look at his theology demonstrates its affinities not only with Animism, but with pantheism of the type the Romantics especially Coleridge, were to invoke (p. 123).

The present thesis attempts to address some of the complexities Rousseau outlines and in order to do so pays even more attention to the precise nature of Cheyne's religious associations and his own theodicy. It has not been posssible to give so much attention to Cheyne's role as a clinician, but, in this context, I would also endorse Rousseau's contention 'that it is perilous to omit him [Cheyne] from a "Whig history" of eighteenth-century medicine...In what we today approvingly call holistic medicine, he may even be the most important spokesman of the century' (pp. 118-9). Any subsequent accounts of Cheyne as medical theorist and practitioner must address the full implications of this charge whilst taking on board his role as religionist.

Prof. Rousseau's essay appeared when the bulk of my research was complete and when most of this thesis was in early draft form. I had already established the basic outlines of a biographical account which largely endorsed Rousseau's mapping of the fundamental pattern of Cheyne's career. What has proved a prolonged process of editing has enabled me to offer critical responses to some of Rousseau's assertions. In particular this thesis provides a more detailed account of Cheyne's contact with a variety of unorthodox religious sects at the time of his breakdown. My conclusions as to precisely how these religious concerns influenced Cheyne's medico-philosophy differs in several basic respects from those offered by Rousseau.

This thesis is presented at a time of a resurgence in contextual and historicist approaches to literature (loosely labelled 'Cultural Materialism' and its less radical American counterpart, 'New Historicism').[6] Although it is not written from a self-consciously fixed theoretical position, the emergence of such approaches has inevitably shaped my interest. The period of this research has seen a minor explosion of references to Cheyne by literary and cultural commentators of all complexions. His name has recently appeared, to my knowledge, in studies of Samuel Richardson, James Boswell, Samuel Johnson, Tobias Smollett, Laurence Sterne, and David Hume, as well as several broader accounts of the Cult of

---

[6] See critical survey in Howard Felperin, *'Cultural Poetics' versus 'Cultural Materialism': the two New Historicisms in Renaissance Studies* in The Uses of the Canon (Oxford, 1989).

Sensibility.[7] Given the basically empirical, biographical project of this thesis, it has proved impossible to give all such allusions detailed critical attention, although throughout an attempt has been made to map where it has been acknowledged that Cheyne's ideas impinged upon the concerns of his more prominent contemporaries.

The structure of this thesis was dictated by the essential pattern of Cheyne's career. My principal aim to provide an accurate account of Cheyne's life has involved the collation of many scattered published sources. These are augmented by transcripts from known manuscript sources, and newly discovered archival evidence including some significant, if fragmentary examples of Cheyne's own correspondence. An attempt has been made to relate Cheyne's published writings to his life. As suggested above, this proves to be a particularly relevant critical approach as there are obvious, if complex lines of force between Cheyne's developing medico-religious ideas and his personal struggles to pursue his profession between bouts of physical and mental distress.

Cheyne's career is recounted over ten chapters. The first examines the evidence for his Abderdeenshire origins, and his emergence from obscurity in 1700 as a vitriolic champion in print of the iatro-mathematical theories of Archibald Pitcairne. The second follows Cheyne's fortunes when he removed to England in 1702 and became an F.R.S., and associate of scientific and literary wits. Cheyne's first substantial work The Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion (1705), is placed within the context of his increasing concern with the theological implications of Newtonianism and his professional search for patronage. His relationships with his patron, the Duke of Roxburghe, his collaborator, John Craige and Sir Isaac Newton are described. It is shown that Cheyne's failure to gain a secure place within the English 'scientific' establishment, was in part the result of his early refusal to keep his theological interpretations within the bounds of an emergent 'orthodox' Newtonianism.

In Chapter 3, after an account of Cheyne's breakdown in 1704-7, there follows a detailed study of the circle of Scottish quietists with which Cheyne was in contact during the significant period of social withdrawal immediately after his collapse. Consideration is given to the importance of their doctrines in shaping Cheyne's subsequent concern with the ethical, psychological, social and medical significance of nervous sensibility. Chapter 4 continues the theme of Cheyne's pietist concerns, but focuses specifically upon his millenarianism. In order to define the precise nature of Cheyne's millenialist beliefs, and particularly their political implications, some

---

[7] These works are cited where appropriate in the body of the thesis but see respectively, Bechler, Ingram, Hinnant, Wiltshire, Flynn, Porter, Todd, Mullan, and Erickson in Bibliography.

chronological anticipation is necessary here, as it is only in Cheyne's mature works that he reveals his faith in a Universal Restoration. Particular attention is paid to the impact of the enthusiastic activities of the French or Camisard Prophets upon the circle of pietists with whom by now, Cheyne was in close contact and an explanation is offered of precisely how these controversies shaped Cheyne's ideas and practice. Chapter 5 examines the enlarged Philosophical Principles of Religion: Natural and Reveal'd (1715). It is argued that this supposedly unorthodox text was in fact widely used in the Universities. The nature and sources of the distinctly theosophical colouring to Cheyne's theodicy and sentimental epistemology are then considered in detail.

Chapter 6 describes Cheyne's fashionable practice as a 'Nerve Doctor' at Bath, and his emergence as a popular medical author with An Essay on the Gout (1720) and An Essay of Health and Long Life (1724). It is shown that Cheyne's neglected, but influential account of 'the Passions' in the latter work formed an influential part of his early engagement with notions of pious sentimentalism. A study of the many satires and commentaries prompted by Cheyne's pronouncements against 'Luxury' illustrates the nature of his rise to cult status amongst an influential circle of literary 'Disciples'. Chapter 7 addresses at length Cheyne's concern with 'The English Malady' and ends with an examination of the nature and influence of his formulation of a determinist notion of nervous sensibility as a sign of intellectual and imaginative superiority.

Chapter 8 is a biographical account of Cheyne's final decade, the 1730s. In particular it considers his political and religious affiliations with the Patriotic Opposition, the theologian William Law, and the founders of Methodism. It is shown that his printer and patient Samuel Richardson became drawn into Cheyne's circle of followers who shared various religious (mystical-theosophical), scientific and political concerns. Chapter 9 opens with a study of Richardson's close practical involvement in the pre-publication history of Cheyne's *Magnum Opus* which reached the public as An Essay on Regimen; with Five Philosophical Discourses (1740) and The Natural Method of Cureing the Diseases of the Body (1742). A description of Cheyne's mature theodicy as represented in these works emphasises Cheyne's increased use of poetic analogies to describe his distinctly pre-romantic vision of 'Spiritual Nature' and his further move away from any popular, mechanistic Newtonianism. After an account of Cheyne's notion of the 'True Philosopher' as spiritual hero, attention is paid to his contact with the dying poet Alexander Pope. It is argued that the Cheyne's optimistic espousal of a doctrine of 'Universal Restoration' informed the satirical-millenialist theme in The New Dunciad. With brief allusions to Sterne, this substantial chapter closes with an analysis of Cheyne's quixotic role as

spiritual enthusiast. Chapter 10 examines Cheyne's dual role as both physician and religious adviser to Samuel Richardson and some of the consequences of the novelist becoming one of Cheyne's 'Disciples'. It is shown that in the closing years of his life Cheyne engaged Richardson's interest in several literary projects which were directly related to a shared concern for 'internal religion'. The conclusion records the circumstances of Cheyne's death, and considers some wider contexts in which this thesis might be considered.

In studies of this nature there is always the danger of falling between two or more disciplinary stools. The diversity and sheer bulk of material relating to Cheyne's diverse career to emerge has not made the original project of biographical and critical comprehensiveness an easy task. Fresh references were still appearing as I checked the bibliography. Whilst some of the obvious gaps in the present study are the unashamed result of lack of expertise, some are due to the lack of material evidence, whilst others are the inevitable outcome of having to shape the results of wide research to fit formal requirements. Whilst the latter pressure has hopefully served to bring the material into better focus, some aspects of the original research are from necessity underepresented or excluded and these are noted where relevant in the body of the thesis or the conclusion.

# 1

# 'ALL THE IMPUDENCE OF THE NORTH': 1672-1702.

## Origins

> As for his parentage Sir, I know nothing of it only he was born at Aberdeen and has all the Impudence of the North rooted in him, he is a big lubbardly fellow, I believe understands the Mathematicks pretty well but knows as little of Medicine as he does of magick, he got his patent from Aberdeen before he went to London which I suppose you know is no great tryal of skill.[1]

This unflattering description came from the pen of an obscure Edinburgh physician Dr Charles Oliphant in an explanatory letter to a friend in 1702. He had just been unfairly attacked in print by a young upstart physician, Dr George Cheyne, who had emerged from obscurity as a defender of the iatro-mathematical medical theories of the most influential Edinburgh physician, Dr Archibald Pitcairne. Cheyne's origins still remain somewhat veiled, but in 1732, at the height of his subsequent fame, an anonymous survey of his native Aberdeenshire described his relatively humble and remote birthplace, as: 'Auchencruive by Methlick in the Buchan, on the north bank of the river Ythan: 'Tis but a farm, yet here was Dr George Cheyne, the famous physician at Bath, born. He is descended of the Cheyne's of Essilmont; and his writings are well known'.[2] Proud of his noble ancestry, shortly before his death Cheyne was the last person to have the arms of the Cheynes of Essilmont registered in his name.[3] Despite these pretensions, the anonymous report of 1732 reinforces John Bulloch's conclusion that the Cheynes of Auchencruive were poor relations of those at nearby Essilmont by the time George was born, and there are indeed frequent indications that as a young man he had a financial struggle to maintain the life of a gentleman scholar.[4]

Unfortunately for a man who was obsessed with longevity, Cheyne's precise birthdate has been open to dispute. Often previously given as 1671, H. R. Viets discovered an entry, dated 24 February 1673 in Methlick Parish Register, which reads; 'the said day James Cheyne in the Mains of Kellie hade a sone baptised named

---

[1] Oliphant to Robert Bennet, December 1702, SRO, G.D. 205, Box 4, f. 34.

[2] Spalding Society Publications 9 (Aberdeen, 1843), p. 322.

[3] J. M. Bulloch, *An Aberdeen Falstaff: Dr George Cheyne our Double M.D.*, (Aberdeen University Library Bulletin 7, (1930), pp. 3-4; A. Y. Cheyne, The Cheyne Family in Scotland (1931), p. 147.

[4] Bulloch, p. 4.

George. [Witnesses John and Patrick Maitland]'.[5] Collating all the scattered evidence suggests that George Cheyne was born sometime between mid-April and July 1672.[6] Cheyne himself gives us little information about his family origins except to remark in the light of his life-long struggle to control his obesity that he was 'born of healthy parents, in the prime of their days, but disposed to corpulence, by the whole race of one side of my family' (EM, p. 325). We know from the frequent appearances of the family name in college records, variously spelt Chein, Cheine, Cheyn, and Cheyne, that the family sent many of its sons to Marischal and Kings Colleges Aberdeen. Cheynes feature prominently in the memorials of Aberdeen's church and state history for several centuries before George's birth. His father James, however, appears to have been a gentleman farmer and tenant of the Maitland family, two of whose members witnessed George's baptism. Bulloch found James Cheyne listed in the Poll Records of 1696 'classing himself as a gentleman' but 'paying a hundredth part of the Maitland of Pitricie valuations' (p. 3). At the time George's father had three children at home, James, Jean and Anna.[7] We know nothing of Cheyne's mother, except that through her he was related to the Burnet family, and consequently to the famous memoirist Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury (1643-1715), whom Cheyne later attended on his deathbed.[8] The Cheynes of Methlick also had close ties with their landlords and kinsmen, the Maitlands. The famous surgeon Dr Charles Maitland (1668-1748) (also born at Auchencruive), remembered as the pioneer of small-pox inoculation and patronised by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu left a considerable part of his estate to his cousin, one Charles Cheyne, a 'Merchant in Edinburgh'.[9] At some

---

5 Viets, pp. 436-7.

6 The birth-date 1672-3 conforms with the inscription on Cheyne's portrait (painted 1732), which describes the subject as 'at the age of 59' (thesis frontis.). Cheyne frequently boasts about his age in his letters. At Christmas 1741 he is 'near 70 in a few Months', and by July 1742 he is 'now at 70'. An obituary described him at the time of his death on 13 April, 1743 as 'in the 71st Year of his Age'. Mullett, Letters LI, p. 77; LXVI, p. 103 and p. 126.

7 James, probably the eldest, had at least two children, George's nephews Charles (d.1760), and Alexander both mentioned in the Doctor's will. Alexander graduated from Marischal in 1704 and eventually received a legacy of £100 from his uncle. Cheyne's will also reveals that a certain Anna Bruce, a poor relation, was a member of the physician's household in 1743, when she received a legacy of £100, although she is not described as a widowed sister. Fasti Academiae Mariscallanea Aberdonesis: Selections from the Records of the Marishal College and University 1593-1860 ed. by P. J. Anderson, 3 vols (New Spalding Club. 1889), I, p. 279; PRO, Prob. Class II, 727.

8 Genealogical table in Bulloch (p. 4). Bishop Burnet, a first cousin of Dr Cheyne's mother, is often portrayed as overseeing Cheyne's early career but there is no direct evidence for this beyond the fact that George attended the Bishop in the capacity of physician, a fact first recorded by Thomas Burnet, the Bishop's son, in his essay *The Life of the Author* appended to Gilbert Burnet History of His Own Times (1823), 2 vols, II, p. 319. Eye-witness account of George Woodbridge in HMC Downshire MSS, I, pp. 905-8.

9 J. M. Bulloch A Pioneer of Inoculation: Charles Maitland, pp. 1-2. This family connection is confirmed in the codicil to Cheyne's will, which reveals that Dr Maitland had given a legacy of £100 to

date before 1703 Cheyne's father remarried, giving George a half-brother, William (1705-1767), and half-sister, Isabella (1704-1788), both of whom were to live in Bath with their successful elder sibling upon whose death they inherited considerable legacies.[10]

Cheyne was equally vague about his early education. His parents originally intended him to enter the Church for which he received 'a liberal and regular education' (EM, p. 325). This will prove significant in the light of his subsequent religious concerns. He was almost certainly the 'George Chein' listed as a *tertian* student at Marischal College, Aberdeen in the winter of 1688-9.[11] Later in 1740, he donated £25 towards the erection of new college buildings and in return received from Marischal an honorary M.D.[12] Cheyne's attendance at Aberdeen, at that time very much a stronghold of Episcopalianism and Jacobite loyalties, coincided with the Glorious Revolution.[13] The consequent disestablishment of the Episcopalian Church and the arrival of Williamite commissions designed to purge the Scottish colleges of their 'Episcopalian taint', had a profound effect upon many of Cheyne's intellectual mentors and fellow students. This political shift was probably instrumental in deflecting his own career away from the Church. His family were Episcopalian and probably Jacobite.[14] Despite what appears to have been a stance of outward conformity and party indifference throughout much of Cheyne's later career in England, the physician maintained strong High-Church sympathies and remained on intimate terms with open Jacobites such as Lord Forbes of Pitsligo, Chevalier Ramsay and Dr William King. Drs. George and James Garden, who both taught Divinity at

---

the Cheyne family which the Doctor in turn passed on to Charles (his nephew) (PRO, Prob. Class II 727).

10 Isabella never married. For William see Chapter 8.

11 Viets, p. 438. Although this suggests he was only 13, when he entered the college such an early start to college life would not have been unique for this period nor would the fact, apparent from the lack of any records, that he never graduated.

12 Mariscallanae: Fasti Academicae 3 vols (New Spalding Society, 1897), II, p. 114.

13 G. D. Henderson, *Religious Conditions in the North-East of Scotland After the Revolution* in Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland, (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 232-38; George Donaldson, *Scottish Conservative North in Seventeenth Century Scotland*, Scottish Church History (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 191-203.

14 For the overt Jacobite sympathies of Cheyne's half-brother see below Chapter 8. For the Jacobite loyalties of Cheyne's 'in-laws' see opening of Chapter 7. A branch of the Cheyne family were prominent Leith merchants and produced several generations of noted Edinburgh surgeons. Like Bulloch before me I have failed to establish the exact connection between the Aberdeen and Leith Cheynes. Leith-born John Cheyne M. D. (1777-1836), who shared his distant kinsman's concern with the relationship between nervous illness and religion, never mentions George, but does record that his great grandfather's family in Leith 'were devoted to the Stuarts, to whose agents they had lent considerable sums of money, which were never returned'.(*Autobiographical Sketch* in Essays on the Partial Derangement of the Mind in Supposed Connection with Religion (Dublin, 1843)).

Aberdeen when Cheyne was a youth and were later to foster the mature Cheyne's interest in quietism, were both non-juring Jacobites after the Revolution.[15]

Cheyne belonged to a generation who often had to forge careers, if not actually in exile, then at least outside their intended clerical or civic professions. The relatively un-regulated medical profession was an obvious alternative for a well-educated son of the minor gentry. We see a similar pattern in the early career of Cheyne's life-long friend and contemporary at Marischal, the Scriblerian satirist Dr John Arbuthnot (1667-1735), a member of a family who had earlier intermarried with the Cheynes.[16] His father, an Episcopal minister lost his living in 1689 and John sought his fortune in England from where he was later instrumental in drawing Cheyne down from Edinburgh. Like the mature Cheyne, Arbuthnot later had to balance traditional and professional loyalties, enjoying Whig patronage, for example, whilst his brother Robert (a sometime patient of Cheyne's), was the Pretender's banker in Paris.[17]

Cheyne was a keen student: 'I passed my youth in close study, and almost constant application to the abstract sciences (wherein my chief pleasure consisted) and consequently in great temperance and a sedentary life' (EM, p. 325). What we know of the Aberdeen curricula at this time suggests that Aristotle, Descartes and Henry More were the dominant authorities, with Marischal showing a distinct bias towards natural philosophy (compared with King's where the humanities were more prominent).[18] Perhaps, in the long term, the most lasting influence at Aberdeen upon the young Cheyne (to be discussed in full in Chapter 3), was to be the strong 'mystical' bias of the religious teaching there, characterised by the Neo-Platonic and quietist leanings of Bishop Henry Scougall (d.1678).

Cheyne assures us that not all his student days were spent in close study: 'I sometimes kept Holiday, diverted myself with Works of the Imagination, and roused Nature by agreable company and good cheer' (EM, p. 325). The first of these interests was to remain with him for life and result in friendships with many famous *literati*, and his close attendance upon the birth of the novel, 'the new species of writing' being pioneered by his patient Samuel Richardson. The latter interest, stemming from a natural bonhomie, was to affect his future career far more dramatically. Although in

---

15 See Chapter 4.

16 P. S. M. Arbuthnot, Memoirs of the Arbuthnots of Kincardineshire (1920), pp. 119-26. John Arbuthnot's great-grandmother was married for the second time to George's forebear Alexander Cheyne. Dr Arbuthnot was descended from her third marriage to John Gordon.

17 G. A. Aitken The Life and Works of Arbuthnot (Oxford, 1892), pp. 4-5 (father), and pp. 101-2 and 172 (Robert).

18 Christine Shepherd *Arts Curriculum at Aberdeen* in Aberdeen and the Enlightenment , ed. by J. J. Carter and J. Pittock (Aberdeen, 1987), pp. 146-154.

later life his love of conviviality never fully deserted him, even at this early date it could lead to nervous reactions, as he recalls somewhat clinically in 1733: 'Upon the slightest Excesses, I always found slippery Bowels...and early shakeing of my Hands and a Disposition to be easily ruffled on a surprise' (EM p. 325). This suggestion of physical sensitivity foreshadows the important part a more serious nervous collapse was to play in the development of Cheyne's career.[19] In retrospect he was keen to show that scholarship and sensibility had characterised his life since youth.

The decade of Cheyne's life after he left college around 1690, until his appearance as a champion of iatro-mathematical medical theories in his first publication A New Theory of Continual Fevers (Edinburgh, 1701) is the most obscure part of his career. He may have gone abroad to further his education, but undoubtedly much of this time was spent in the role of private tutor to a young gentleman: a position he held in a family near Edinburgh in the late 1690s when he came under the powerful influence of Dr Archibald Pitcairne (1652-1713). It is essential that we examine the career of a man who had a profound formative influence upon Cheyne.

## 'My Great Master and Generous Friend'

That is how Cheyne was later to describe his mentor Pitcairne. The Edinburgh physician and polymath came from a landed Episcopalian family in Fife and like his pupil Cheyne was originally educated for a career in the Church.[20] After developing an interest in medicine whilst travelling for his own health on the Continent, he returned to Scotland and began to study mathematics with his childhood friend David Gregory (1659-1708) (nephew of the famous Aberdeen mathematician James Gregory (1659-1708)).[21] It was probably the lack of a medical faculty at Edinburgh University which led Pitcairne to return to the Continent where in 1680 he graduated M.A. at Rheims. In the following year he returned to Edinburgh where he became a founding member of the Royal College of Physicians (R.C.P.E.). In September 1685

---

[19] See Chapter 3.

[20] There is no modern biography of Pitcairne. My account is based upon the following: W. T. Johnston (editor), The Best of our Owne: The Letters of Archibald Pitcairne, 1652-1713 (Edinburgh, 1979); Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, article in Biographia Britannica, (1760), V, pp. 3360- 66; Gilbert Stuart, *A Memoir of Dr Archibald Pitcairne*, The Edinburgh Magazine and Review, I, (April, 1774), pp. 368-82; Charles Webster, An Account of the Life and Writings of the Celebrated Dr Pitcairne, (Edinburgh, 1781); David Irving Lives of the Scottish Writers 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1839), II, p. 170. Robert Peel Ritchie The Early Days of the Royal College of Phisitians [sic] Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1899), pp. 159-187; Constance Pitcairne The History of the Fife Pitcairns, (Edinburgh, 1905); R. Thin, *Archibald Pitcairne*, Edinburgh Medical Journal , (July 1928); DNB, XV, pp. 1221-23; and T.M. Brown's entry in DSB, IV, pp. 1-3.

[21] A. Grainger, The Academic Gregories (1901).

he was made one of the first professors of medicine in the newly formed Faculty of Medicine in the former Town College, newly named Edinburgh University, but it is unlikely that he delivered any public lectures in this capacity since the Revolution put Presbyterians in charge of the ruling Town Council.[22] Alongside his medical and mathematical interests Pitcairne was also an accomplished Latinist, who nostalgically sought to encourage a humanist tradition which he associated with the work of George Buchanan (1587-1671), Arthur Johnston M. D. (1587-1641), Hector Boece (c.1465-1536), and the writers of Epistolae Regum Scotorum (published 1722-1724).[23] After the Revolution he maintained outspoken Stuart and Episcopalian loyalties and set his 'wits' against what he saw as the philistinism of the Presbyterian establishment in a Hudibrastic satire Babel, a satirical play The Assembly (written 1696, published 1720), and numerous privately circulated shorter Latin verses.[24] As his letters reveal, Pitcairne's reputation for controversy, conviviality, wit and indulgence in serious drinking amongst his Edinburgh 'Club' was well earned. [25]

Comments Cheyne made in 1724 suggest that in 1701 he had not been studying medicine for long when he first defended Pitcairne in print.[26] A private remark from Pitcairne reveals that Cheyne was taught mathematics at some stage by Pitcairne's associate, Thomas Bower, who became Professor of Mathematics at King's, Aberdeen in 1703.[27] It appears to have been Cheyne's mathematical abilities which drew the attention of Pitcairne who at the time, under the influence of Newton's Principia, was endeavouring to apply mathematical methods to medical theory. Pitcairne and young Gregory had enthusiastically awaited the appearance of Newton's Principia (1689), and belonged to the limited circle of scholars who could comprehend the

---

22 Andrew Bower, The History of the University of Edinburgh, (Edinburgh, 1817), I, p. 427. The appointments were part of a programme of royal patronage begun by James VII, when Duke of York, and described in Hugh Ouston, 'York in Edinburgh, James VII and the Patronage of Learning in Scotland 1676-1688', New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland, ed. by J. Dwyer, R. A. Mason, and A. Murdoch, (Edinburgh, 1982), pp. 133-55.

23 Douglas Duncan, Thomas Ruddiman: a Study in Scottish Scholarship of the Early Eighteenth-Century, (Edinburgh, 1965), pp. 15-23; John Macqueen, Enlightenment and Scottish Literature: Progress and Poetry (Edinburgh, 1982), Ch. 1; Roger Emerson *Science and the Origins and Concerns of the Scottish Enlightenment* History of Science xxvi (1988), pp. 341f. Pitcairne's place in the intellectual history of early eighteenth-century Scotland demands more attention.

24 Poemata Selecta (Edinburgh, privately printed 1712?), *Babel* in Publications of the Maitland Club 60 (1830) and The Assembly, ed., T. Tobin (Indiana, 1972).

25 Johnston Letters passim and Robert Chambers, Traditions of Old Edinburgh, (Edinburgh 1824, reprinted 1967), pp. 158-160.

26 EH, p. ii-iii.

27 Bulloch A History of Aberdeen University: 1495-1895 (1895), p. 137; Johnston, Letters, p. 38, where Pitcairne describes Bower in 1703 as 'a brave man and Cheyn's master' and Ibid., pp. 45 and 52 for his promotion.

mathematical basis of the work. Pitcairne had launched his innovative theoretical programme during what proved to be a brief spell as Professor of Physic at Leyden in 1692-3.[28] En-route to Holland, Pitcairne had stayed with Gregory and Newton, and carried away a manuscript copy of Newton's *De Natura Acidorum*, an essay containing some of his earliest thoughts on the implications of short-range gravitational forces for advancing medical theory.[29] This early application of the newly formulated matter-theory to problems of animal function such as fermentation, putrefaction and the creation of 'animal heat' inspired Pitcairne to formulate his own iatro-mathematical theories which he launched in his influential Leyden lectures, published as Dissertationes Medicae (Rotterdam, 1701).[30] In these disputations, and initially in his inaugural oration at Leyden, Pitcairne launched an attack upon earlier, mainly Cartesian, mechanistic and chemical physiological explanations, and called for an iatro-mathematical approach which he believed to be Newtonian.[31] His main model for this endeavour was the Italian iatro-mechanical school headed by Giovanni Borelli (1608-1679), and his pupil, Lorenzo Bellini (1643-1704), and it was in order to further their anatomical advances that Pitcairne endeavoured to establish an anatomy theatre and school at Edinburgh.[32] It has been suggested that Cheyne actually attended Pitcairne's lectures at Leyden by those who accept that an obscure entry in the University matriculation records refers to Cheyne.[33]

---

28 This move may have been prompted by the 1690 visitation of a Williamite Commission to Edinburgh, when Pitcairne witnessed the ordeal of fellow Episcopalian, David Gregory, (Professor of Mathematics since 1682), who was tried for refusing to subscribe to the Confession of Faith and accused of atheism. Pitcairne successfully defended Gregory, who applied for the post of Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, which he gained directly through Newton's influence (R. K. Hannay, *The Visitation of the College of Edinburgh in 1690*, Book of the Old Edinburgh Club, viii, pp. 79-100).

29 G. A. Lindenboom, *Pitcairne's Leyden Interlude Described from the Documents*, Annals of Science, 19 (1963), pp. 273-84. Newton's paper was first published in John Harris's Lexicon Technicum (London, 1710), but circulated in manuscript by Pitcairne with the addition of his own marginal notes.

30 For Pitcairne's contact with Newton see Anita Guerrini, *James Keill, George Cheyne, and Newtonian Physiology, 1690- 1740*, Journal of the History of Biology, 18, no. 12, (Summer, 1985), pp. 247- 266 (hereafter, *Keill*) and *Archibald Pitcairne and Newtonian Medicine* Medical History 31 (1987), pp. 70-93.

31 Guerrini has shown in her thesis *Newtonian Matter Theory, Chemistry, and Medicine, 1690-1714*, (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1983) (hereafter, *Thesis* ), that Pitcairne and his followers never developed the full potential of Newton's matter-theory based upon short-range attraction until after his published pronouncements on the subject in the Queries to The Optics (1704).

32 DSB, II, pp. 306-14; I, pp. 592-4; Guerrini, *Keill*, p. 247; Craig, pp. 390-1 and Thin, pp. 378-80. Borelli's De Motu Animalium, 2 vols (Rome, 1680-1) and Bellini's De Urinis et Pulsibus et Missione Sanguinis (Florence, 1683), were frequently discussed by Pitcairne's followers including Cheyne.

33 The entry, published by R. W. Innes-Smith in English Speaking Students of Medicine at the University of Leyden (1932), reads 'Heill, Georgius. Scotus, Dec 3, 1691 aet 23. Med'.(p. 113) which may be a corruption of Cheyne's name. The age given does not conform with any suggested, but many of these entries are inaccurate. More importantly it seems odd that Cheyne, who always continued to

Pitcairne was one of the foremost physicians in Europe when Cheyne first became a member of his club of 'wits'. As the recent work of Roger Emerson has shown, much of the intellectual ferment usually associated with a mid-eighteenth century Scottish Enlightenment had its roots in the virtuosi activities of the 1690s.[34] As Pitcairne's protégé, Cheyne was a young member of a considerable network of Scottish scholars, with connections in both England and on the Continent, especially. He would have had access to Pitcairne's sophisticated private library and been a party to his teacher's correspondence with scholars in England, Holland and Italy.[35] In particular Pitcairne was kept in close touch with Newton's work in both natural philosophy and theology through David Gregory who moved to England in 169I. In 1695 Pitcairne agreed to undertake the official translation of Newton's unpublished work on optics, although this was later undertaken by Roger Cotes.[36]

When the eighteenth-century dawned, George Cheyne emerges as one of a distinct circle of medical theorists who, as sometime pupils of Pitcairne in Edinburgh or Leyden, or pupils of Gregory at Oxford, sought to develop Newtonian ideas on mechanics, chemistry and matter-theory to solve particular problems of theoretical medicine.[37] This circle, described in detail by Anita Guerrini as the 'Tory Newtonians', included besides Cheyne; the Aberdonian brothers Dr John Keill (1671-1721) (who replaced Gregory in 1709 as Savilian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford), and James Keill (1673-1719), physiologist, anatomist and general practitioner in Northampton; Swift's physician Dr William Cockburn (1669-1739), and Dr Richard Mead (1673-1754), who became a Royal physician and one of the most wealthy doctors in Britain. All these physicians were acquainted with Cheyne after, if not before, his departure for England in the winter of 1701-2 by which time he had shown his loyalty to Pitcairne in print, in a New Theory of Continued Fevers (1701). This short treatise served to fan the flames of a controversy which had been raging amongst the Edinburgh medical fraternity since shortly after Pitcairne's somewhat precipitate return from Leyden.

---

admit his debt to Pitcairne, never mentioned his attendance at his master's famous lectures at the prestigious University of Leyden.

[34] Emerson, *Sir Robert Sibbald, Kt, the Royal Society of Scotland and the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment* Annals of Science, xlv (1988), pp. 41-72 and same author in f. 23 above.

[35] Pitcairne's library of over 1,500 volumes was sold by his widow to Peter the Great and survives in the 'Russian' Academy of Science (J. H. Appleby *Archibald Pitcairne Re-Encountered: A Note on his Manuscript Poems and Printed Library Catalogue* in The Biblioteck Vol 12, 6 (1986), pp. 137-9).

[36] Johnston, Letters, p. 22.

[37] Cheyne's place discussed in Guerrini, *Thesis*, passim, and *Keill*, pp. 247-66.

**Cheyne and the Fever Dispute**

After a year at Leyden, Pitcairne returned to Edinburgh to marry the daughter of Sir Archibald Stevenson, the first president of the Royal College of Physicians. Through his father-in-law's influence Pitcairne established a considerable practice.[38] He became active within the R.C.P.E. and was soon involved in factional disputes which broke out in a controversy ostensibly over the theoretical and practical treatment of fevers but which were rooted in religious and political differences and professional rivalry. The initial phase of the notorious 'Fever Dispute', which as a whole is well represented in over forty pamphlets, has been examined by Andrew Cunningham.[39] Two factions emerge, the one led by the virtuoso Sir Robert Sibbald M. D., who had earlier been elected a professor of medicine along with Pitcairne in 1681, whilst the other grouping, to which Pitcairne adhered, supported his father-in-law Stevenson and iatro-mathematical theory.[40] The battle, as Cunningham has shown, was largely fought at one remove by adherents of these two parties who subscribed to opposing medical theories based upon the authority of either Newton or Sydenham, whilst in practice their methods of treatment were often identical. In particular Pitcairne was concerned to adapt what he claimed were Newtonian theories to account for accepted practices rather than to introduce new methods of treatment.[41] The resulting arguments led to an infamous 'ryot' between the college officers in the autumn of 1695 and the subsequent suspension of Pitcairne and some of his supporters.

The dispute concerning the treatment of fevers and other theoretical and professional matters continued to be debated both within and outwith the circle of College members. As several of Pitcairne's rivals and protégés moved South in

---

38 The precise reasons for Pitcairne never returning to Leyden are unknown although it is usually suggested that his wife's family refused to allow their daughter to follow him to Holland. Leslie Shirlaw suggests that Pitcairne never returned because he took up an appeal from Gregory to use his medical skills to treat Newton who at this time was suffering a breakdown which curiously resembles that suffered by Cheyne ten years later. Leslie Shirlaw, *Dr Archibald Pitcairne and Sir Isaac Newton's "Black Years" (1692- 4)* The Chronicle of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, (1975), pp. 23-6.

39 A. Cunningham, *Sydenham versus Newton: the Edinburgh Fever Dispute in the 1690s* in Theories of Fever from Antiquity to the Enlightenment, ed. by W. F. Bynum and V. Nutton, (1981). This study supersedes all earlier inaccurate accounts.

40 R. L. Emerson *Sir Robert Sibbald, Kt, the Royal Society of Scotland and the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment* in Annals of Science, 45 (1988), pp. 41-72.

41 Cunningham, p. 87. and W. B. Howie, *Sir Archibald Stevenson, his ancestry, and the Riot in the College of Physicians at Edinburgh*, Medical History, II, pp. 269-24. Howie has carefully researched the political and religious backgrounds of Sibbald and Stevenson in the context of the fever dispute, but as Cunningham concludes, although there are clear indications that such divisions existed amongst the Edinburgh medical fraternity there is simply not enough evidence relating to the participants to come to any conclusions about the role of such loyalties in causing the controversy when set against other personal and intellectual differences.

pursuit of patronage (Cheyne amongst them), the controversy widened both in geographical and in theoretical scope, with Pitcairne undertaking elaborate ruses to have pamphlets published at London on his behalf under assumed names.[42] Whilst Cunningham has examined the early period of this pamphlet war, the later exchanges which continued to ricochet between the disputants until Pitcairne's death in 1713 have remained undocumented. Cheyne's first publication, A New Theory of Continued Fevers (Edinburgh, 1700), belongs to an unexamined phase of the dispute. An enlarged edition appeared at Edinburgh in 1702, after Cheyne had left for London, and helped to keep the controversy alive. Both editions should be read in the context of five other pamphlets appearing between 1699 and 1702, but space prevents the detailed discussion of these often vitriolic, sometimes repetitive, but revealing exchanges in which medical, theological and literary issues are all under scrutiny. Cheyne also contributed the vindictive Remarks on the Two Late Pamphlets written by Dr Oliphant against Dr Pitcairn's Dissertations and The New Theory of Fevers etc. (Edinburgh, 1702) which, as its title reveals, is a response to the criticisms of both Pitcairne and Cheyne voiced in pamphlets published previously by the Edinburgh physician Charles Oliphant. This specific dispute with Oliphant reveals something of Cheyne's character and professional loyalties at the beginning of his public career.

We know very little of the career of Cheyne's opponent, Charles Oliphant M.D. (d. 1719).[43] He became a member of the R.C.P.E on 17 April 1694 and by June of that year was college treasurer.[44] Oliphant was a supporter of the Pitcairne-Stevenson faction in the 'ryot' and he was asked to surrender the accounts prior to his dismissal from the College on 4 December, 1695.[45] In the light of their apparent alliance in 1695 it is difficult to ascertain the reasons why, by 1702, there was such animosity between Pitcairne and Oliphant, except to suggest that it grew from a personal and professional rivalry which surfaced as they both attempted to regain the confidence of

---

42 Johnston Letters, pp. 56-7. The authorship and content of some of these later exchanges is discussed in my essay 'A Modest Examination: Dr John Arbuthnot, Dr Archibald Pitcairne and the Scottish Tory Newtonians: 1669-1711' (BJECS, forthcoming).

43 Guerrini notes that he married David Gregory's sister in 1695 and she suggests this may indicate there were very personal reasons for the quarrel with Cheyne and Pitcairne (*Thesis*, p. 112). Oliphant probably originated from Ayrshire which he later represented in Parliament. As an ambitious physician he followed Cheyne down to London in 1708 where he knew Blackmore, Arbuthnot and other 'scientific wits' (SRO, GD 205/34, f.4).

44 Robert Peel-Ritchie, preface, p. xi. On 17 January 1695 Oliphant was acting as an 'Examinator' alongside Pitcairne to ascertain the competence of prospective members of the college. Judging from the 'Stent Rolls' for Edinburgh in 1699 Oliphant was a very successful physician (Ibid. p. 144).

45 It was first mooted at a college meeting in 1700 that Oliphant and Pitcairne be reinstated but this did not actually take place until St Andrew's Day 1704, when, after the passing of an 'Act of Oblivion' they both attended a reunion celebration (Peel-Ritchie, pp. 171-2; 181; Craig, pp. 418-9).

the College establishment. This could only be achieved by being seen to adhere to the particular medical theory which the active College members accepted as orthodox. Their dispute began over the old question of the treatment of fevers but widened into a broader debate over medical practice and ethics. The first public indications of their estrangement emerge in a series of six pamphlets which appeared in response to Oliphant's A Short Discourse to Prove the Usefullness of Vomiting in Fevers, (Edinburgh, 1699): an attack upon Pitcairne's alternative theory and treatment.

Pitcairne was goaded into retaliation and persuaded his pupil George Cheyne to write an anonymous defence of the iatro-mathematical theory, A New Theory of Continual Fevers (1701). Later, in an apologetic Preface of 1724, Cheyne described how he was first provoked into print to defend his 'great Master and generous Friend, Dr Pitcairn' who felt 'ill-used by some of his Brethren of the Profession who then were at Intestine War on the Subject of Fevers; and fancied the handsomest way to bring them down, was to exhibit a more specious Account of the Disease, than any of them had shown'. A busy Pitcairne recruited his pupils to write defensive responses:

> Two others therefore, with myself were joined to manage the Affair: In which he was to cut and carve, and to add the practical Part. My Province was the Theory. I was then very young in the Profession, and living in the Country. But in a few Days I brought in my Part finished, as it now appears, under the Title of The New Theory of Fevers. The others either suppres'd or forgot theirs, and mine, without the least Alteration, but in a few Words, was ordered for the Press. I could not resist the Commands of my Friend; but would not suffer my Name to be put to it, being conscious it was a raw and unexperienced Performance (EH, pp. ii-iii).

The work is essentially a defence and development of Pitcairne's own account of fevers as taught at Leyden and subsequently published as *Dissertatio de Curatione Febrium* in his famous Dissertationes Medicae (1701). Pitcairne proudly arranged for its distribution throughout the scientific community, sending David Gregory a complimentary copy. The virtuoso Highland Minister, Colin Campbell of Ardhattan (1644-1726), an accomplished amateur mathematician, received his copy from Pitcairne in early October 1701 with the comment that 'Dr Cheyn's book is yours by gift, & a very small gift tho the book is great', and the promise that 'I'l make a correspondence betwixt yow and him'.[46] Pitcairne was true to his word and both Campbell, and his son Patrick who was studying medicine under Pitcairne at the time, became enthusiastic students of Cheyne's iatro-mathematical theories.[47]

Cheyne opens his account of fevers with a definitive statement of the mechanistic and hydraulic physiological theory he inherited through Pitcairne from the Italian

---

[46] Johnston, Letters, pp. 35-38.

[47] C. P. Finlayson, *Two Highland Protégés of Dr Archibald Pitcairne* in Edinburgh Medical Journal LX, Ser. III, No. 3 (1953), pp. 52-60.

iatro-mechanists: 'This Machine we carry about is nothing but an Infinity of Branching and Winding Canals, fill'd with Liquors of Different Natures...'.[48] He conceives of dysfunction in terms of obstructions to the flow of blood and other bodily fluids through these canals. Much of the work is taken up with the mathematical and geometrical analysis of fluid dynamics in an abstruse attempt to adapt Newtonian analysis to physiological phenomena. Guerrini, the only modern scholar to examine Cheyne's theory of fevers, notes that the latter part of the work dealing with the action of mercurial medicines reveals Cheyne's access, through Pitcairne, to Newton's essay *De Natura Acidorum*.[49]

An enlarged second edition appeared in 1702, with the altered title of A New Theory of Acute and Slow Continu'd Fevers...together with the application of the General Proposition to Hectick Fevers, to which was prefixed for the first time *An Essay Concerning the Improvement of the Theory of Medicine*. In this form the work was to become something of a standard account of the subject, with further editions being published in 1722, 1724, 1740, and 1753. In 1724, although Cheyne apologised for his ungentlemanly treatment of Oliphant, he still subscribed to the basic theory and method of treatment put forward in his Theory of Fevers (EH, p. ix). The first edition of Cheyne's New Theory (1701), is entirely serious in tone and makes no personal references to the participants in the fever debate, except in a purely medical context. The 1702 edition appears to have been penned in Scotland, but appeared with Cheyne at a safe distance in London, and consequently in a somewhat defensively vitriolic preface he admits that it had been originally published anonymously in response to the pamphlets proliferating on the subject at Edinburgh.

Internal evidence suggests that *An Essay on the Improvements of the Theory of Medicine*, was also written whilst Cheyne was still in Scotland. It takes the form of an important manifesto of Pitcairne's iatro-mathematical programme of medical reform. Guerrini notes its resemblance to Pitcairne's original pronouncements in his 1693 inaugural lecture at Leyden, but she emphasises the more specifically Newtonian nature of the programme proposed by Cheyne.[50] It is Cheyne's most accomplished

---

48 Cheyne, New Theory (1701), pp. i-ii.

49 She concludes her analysis, (made in the context of her specific concern with the development of Newtonian matter-theory by Pitcairne's followers), by suggesting that Cheyne was a well informed, competent mathematician, and 'a loyal follower, but not a slavish imitator of Pitcairne'. She also notes that like Pitcairne Cheyne did not undertake a full commitment to Newtonian attractions, even though he implied their existence (*Thesis*, p. 117).

50 Guerrini places the essay within the overall 'Tory Newtonian' project in her *Thesis* (pp. 66-8; pp. 118-20), and *Isaac Newton, George Cheyne and the 'Principia Medicinae'*, in The Medical Revolution of the Seventeenth Century ed. by Andrew Wear and Roger French (Cambridge, 1989), esp. pp. 227-229.

early piece of writing, bearing none of the marks of hasty, irate composition of his Remarks. As a whole it suggests a self-advertisement for an author wishing to show his ability to launch an innovative university course in 'Newtonian' natural philosophy as applied to theoretical medicine.

Cheyne reveals his anxiety over the academic status of medicine which is undermined by a lack of theoretical vigour. It is absurd that whilst all physicians agree that the body consists of a mixture of fluids and solids, the mathematical methods of fluid mechanics, hydraulics and geometry have not been properly applied to the subject. This would put medicine 'above the Contempt and Reproaches, which are daily thrown upon it' by 'the lowest pretenders to Satyr and Wit' (p.5). In a crude attempt to provide a 'conjectural history' of medicine, he reveals that in 1702 his loyalties lay firmly in the camp of the Moderns against that of the Ancients. Classical physicians were well versed in the practical side of medicine but their remedies are now anachronistic. Commenting on the Greeks, Cheyne remarks that as 'their Philosophy was not tolerable, so their Anatomy was little better, and their Natural History worst of all':

> Many of their...Remedies seem very little use to us now: for such is the Intemperance, Indiscretion, and Lewdness ...of our Days, that we are in compleat Possession of all their Diseases, heighten'd by as many Degrees of Malignity, as there are Years betwixt us and them; and in the mean time we have begotten an infinite Variety of Plaguy [sic] new ones, against which most of their Remedies would have less force, than the Children of our Age, against the giants of theirs (p. 6).

This reveals a sense of millennial decay which becomes more blatant in Cheyne's later writings. Cheyne also rejects the chemists and alchemists of the previous century with their 'wild efforts to introduce their *Laboratories* into the Bodies of Animals'. He condemns their Scholasticism whereby 'all was resolv'd into substantial Forms, Sympathies, and Antipathies' as 'meer Metaphor' or 'just Plain Nonsence, unless these things naturally follow from the determin'd Laws of Motion'. In short he argues that 'all Natural Philosophy, unless supported by Geometry, is but a pleasant *Romance*' (p. 9).

Amongst recent developments he praises Galileo, Toricelli and Pascal in bringing to light 'the three grand Properties of Air...its Elasticity, Gravity and Circumambient Pressure' which have made a great contribution to the 'Mechanical Explication of the Animal Oeconomy'. Cheyne praises Descartes for being the first 'who banish'd effectually the *Aristotelian* jargon, and made men reflect upon the natural Right they had to a Freedom of Thinking', but like many of his contemporaries, Cheyne's attitude to Descartes is ambiguous because he was concerned about the theological

implications of purely mechanistic explanations of the animal oeconomy (pp. 12-3). Of Cheyne's other immediate predecessors inevitably Pitcairne takes a central position.

Cheyne also provides a detailed account of the areas where research should be developed, emphasising the need for improved anatomical investigations and microscopy and the application of mathematical principles to the resulting data. Such a programme would create 'a Complete System of Mechanical Philosophy':

> All the great, visible, constant and uniform *Phenomena* of Nature, have been attempted by the Eminent Mathematicians of this, and the Last Age, but accounted for, from the rigo rous Geometry, by that Stupendously Great Man, Mr. *Newton*...to him we owe the key, whereby the Secrets of Nature are unlock'd, to wit, the general Way of managing Aequations, the Methods of *Infinite Series* and *Fluxions*, direct and inverse. Examples of which his whole *Principia* are. This is that which will bring *Analyticks, Geometry, Natural Philosophy*, and the *Theory of Medicine*, to their utmost Perfection, if ever they get thither (pp. 24-5).

Cheyne devotes two pages to an outlined plan of what he terms a *Principia Medicinae Theoreticae Mathematicae*. With typical modesty, in the list of specific studies which he believes would contribute to the project, he includes his own paper on the 'Inverse Method of Fluxions', an advanced study of Calculus which he was soon to publish as Fluxionem Methodus Inversa: Sive Quantitaum Fluentium Leges Generaliones (1703). He suggests that someone should collect together all the mathematical papers contributed to journals throughout Europe in an attempt to effect a change in the attitude of scholars towards publishing their achievements. At present they tend to keep their discoveries secret in order to avoid contentious debates and time is wasted on unnecessarily repeating work, or taking up challenges to solve irrelevant problems (pp. 34-5). He touches the same topic less politely in his Remarks, where he writes that 'such Vermine' as conservative theorists like Oliphant,

> have occasioned more *Posthumous* works of ingenious men, than all the Diseases in the Bills of Mortality: for few men care for having their Labours only for their Pains, and losing their quiet to the bargain; and these considerations are at this very time in hazard of robbing us of one of the noblest and most useful pieces of *Philosophie*, I mean *Mr. Newton's* Treatise of Light and Colours (p. 3).

Newton was notoriously cautious about publishing his work, but Cheyne's loyalty stemmed from more than purely intellectual motivations. Newton was becoming a powerful wielder of patronage. By 1702 he was already Warden of the Mint and was shortly to increase his influential status in English science as President of the Royal Society, (he was knighted by Queen Anne on 16 April, 1705). As will emerge below, it was with definite hopes of Newton's patronage that Cheyne travelled to England. In the following chapter it will be shown how Cheyne's very zeal to see Newton's work

put into print contributed to his failure to establish himself firmly within the Newtonian inner-circle. In the event, Cheyne's ambitious involvement in the competitive scholarly climate he condemned was to have unexpected consequences for the subsequent direction of his career.

**The 'Bully Under Pay'**

By the time Cheyne's Essay appeared the arguments between Edinburgh physicians had already been revived by the publication of a Latin dissertation by Oliphant entitled Dissertatio de Salute quam ferunt Aaegront anibus Dissertationes Archibaldi Pitcarnii (Edinburgh, 1702), which severely criticised Pitcairne's theories, methods of treatment and character.[51] The first reaction from the Pitcairne camp, A Short Answer to a Late Pamphlet against Doctor Pitcairn's Dissertations (Edinburgh, 1702), was by 'J.J.', a certain J. Johnston M.D., who had been taught by Pitcairne at Leyden.[52] Johnston accused Oliphant of circulating malicious writings designed to undermine Pitcairne's reputation and 'wheedle himself into Employment' (p. 4). A supporter of Oliphant later called Johnston 'a little insignificant Puppet', dismissing his 'Scurrilous Lybel' as 'the Peal of Billingsgate'.[53] Literary considerations enter the argument with a debate over the propriety of using English instead of Latin. Whilst praising Pitcairne as a master of Latin, Johnstone maligns Oliphant's 'Stiff, Affected and unequal' style. Conscious of Pitcairne's tastes, Oliphant was subsequently to defend his own Latin as being modelled on that of Buchanan.[54] In the context of these arguments over style, Cheyne defends Pitcairne's 'manly *Laconick Eloquence*' in the second edition of his work on fevers (p. 19). These were the qualities he sought to emulate in his own writings, but it is the influence of Pitcairne's provocative and frequently ironic 'wit' which dominates Cheyne's early pieces.

The remainder of Johnston's pamphlet is concerned with a systematic refutation of Oliphant's accusations of plagiarism and a detailed defence of Pitcairne's famous 'Dissertations': 'The Dissertator [Oliphant] is not content to give a single Victory over D[r].P[itcairne]. as he fancies, but like another Don Quixote he deals blows about

---

51 Untraced: title from Irving II, p. 205.

52 Irving suggests that 'J.J.' was Thomas Bower (Lives, II, p. 205). But Pitcairne writing to his friend, the Edinburgh trained surgeon Dr Robert Erskine (then resident in London), on 19 July 1702, opens: 'Last day, I send you Dr Oliphant's dissertation against me, Dr Johnston's short answer to it, Oliphant's refutation of that and Johnston's reply'. (Royal Society of London Archives, Fond 120, Opis 1, no 140).

53 Anon, A Short Answer to Two Lybels Lately Published against D.O. by Drs. Cheyne and Pitcairne (Edinburgh, 1702), p. 3.

54 A Refutation of a Short Answer to the Examination of Dr Pitcairne's Dissertations (Edinburgh, 1702), pp. 4-5.

him, and furiously attaques the learn'd author of *The New Theory of Fevers*' (p. 30). Johnston goes on to defend Cheyne's use of mathematics, the originality of Cheyne and Pitcairne's theories of secretion and their accounts of the operations of vomitive and purgative medicines. In particular he praises the arguments put forward in Cheyne's *Essay Concerning the Improvements of the Theory of Medicine*, and Johnston hopes that 'the learn'd Author of the Theory', will not waste his valuable time answering 'The Dissertator's Impertinent ribaldry'. His portrait of Cheyne as a young prodigy illustrates the extent to which in 1702 Cheyne's fortunes in London were being closely followed by Pitcairne's circle back in Edinburgh:

> Cheyne is now Imploy'd about more serious studies, which may prove useful to Mankind. We expect with Impatience from the Press his book about the *Inverse Method of Fluxions*, which is the most hard and difficult part of Mathematicks....Now the *Inverse Method* ...will be of infinit use in natural Philosophie and Medicine; and this work seems to be the fruits of many years close study in Mathematicks, than the Product of a young Man, at his first appearance in the World; and will clearly demonstrat that he's neither *Pinqui ingenio*, nor *Rudis ac impeditus Auctor*, as the Dissertator is pleas'd to call him.[55]

Pitcairne's circle of 'Newtonian' medical theorists, already familiar with Cheyne's *Inverse Method*, patriotically looked forward to its publication as a significant contribution to the development of Newtonian mathematics.

Johnston also quotes a letter written in response to Oliphant's Dissertatio from Cheyne in London to Pitcairne.[56] This letter, full of mathematical problems directed at Oliphant, was printed to display Cheyne's abilities but these challenges are somewhat absurd in the context of Oliphant's repeated argument that pure mathematics are irrelevant to the requirements of a good physician. The pamphlet concludes by accusing 'the Dissertator' of starting a 'New War' between the physicians of Edinburgh 'after the noisie Squables and Quarrels amongst the Physicians in this Place seemed to be extinguish'd or at least laid aside' (p. 38). Certainly Oliphant's remarks sparked off a fresh battle in the 'Fever Dispute'. Johnston's defence soon prompted a reply from the Oliphant faction: A Refutation of the Short Answer to the Examination of Dr Pitcairn's Dissertations (Edinburgh, 1702), ostensibly written by a

---

55 Johnston, A Short Answer to a Late Pamphlet, p. 31.

56 It is evident from Pitcairne's surviving correspondence that master and pupil remained in close contact after Cheyne's departure for London, but no letters are extant. Johnston's hitherto unnoted transcription is the only fragment of this communication between Cheyne and Pitcairne that seems to have survived. In part it reads: 'I advise you Doctor, not to trouble your head about him, who now intends to write against you; Do not delay the republishing your Book a minut for such considerations, it were a lybell on your Writings to sully them with such pityfull stuff: Even one with a *Barbarium idioma* like mine (for so they tell me he complements me) would be sufficient against him, *Et quaerens illideredentum offendet solido*. I say, he neither understands your Book nor mine fully...'. (A Short Answer, p. 33.)

friend of Oliphant's but probably penned by the doctor himself, it answers the former accusations. Amidst several vitriolic counter-charges, the author mocks the sycophantic behaviour of 'Two, Three little Pedants' that congregate around Pitcairne, and repeat his every 'witticism' around the town. The arguments become noticeably more personal as Oliphant argues that his former friendship with Pitcairne renders Cheyne's response particularly unfair.[57] Pitcairne is accused of being envious of Oliphant after the former's return from Holland and of employing Cheyne, a 'Bully under pay....to write contemptibly of my Friend in the Second edition of that Smooth Piece: Which if he should deny, at least he cannot disown his being privy to it before that work was published, and the allowing it to be done' (p. 14).

Cheyne stood his ground in the more vitriolic Remarks on Two Late Pamphlets Written by Dr Oliphant against Dr Pitcairn's Dissertations and the New Theory of Fevers (Edinburgh, 1702), to which Oliphant responded with A Short Answer to Two Lybels Lately Published Against D.O. by Drs. Cheyne and Pitcairn, (Edinburgh ?, 1702), by far the most personal of these exchanges. Cheyne launches into an outright attack upon Oliphant's medical ideas, abilities and character, differing markedly from the detached academic tone of the original New Theory. He employs crude local colour to portray Oliphant 'reduced to the condition of being only admired by himself, by his *Translators*, and employ'd by the *Ladies of the Cowgate* [i.e. prostitutes], (p. 17). Cheyne defies Oliphant to 'spew out all your venome' upon Pitcairne and undergo a test of skill in what reads more like challenge to a duel than a scientific debate. Each stab at Oliphant is matched by a glowing encomium upon Pitcairne. Oliphant talks of Pitcairne's 'Malicious Club of Little Villains' and launches into a colourful and revealing expose of Cheyne as a charlatan and an inebriate. Cheyne suggests in his Remarks that he had overheard Oliphant singing irreligious and blasphemous songs. Oliphant responds by asserting that, despite having been a visitor to the household where Cheyne was employed as a tutor, their paths never crossed. The exasperated Oliphant could not resist declaring that on the contrary such libertine behaviour has been reported of Cheyne himself:

> It was long e're I could guess what Fury had inspired the Ruffian [Cheyne] to fall so foully on one who had never done him an ill Office till after enquiry I found he had been egg'd on by his Patron, who had falsely told him D.O. [Dr Oliphant] had been the occasion of his being removed from that Gentleman's Family where he found himself at ease; tho' the Truth of the

---

[57] Oliphant, it is argued, had helped Pitcairne gain his post at Leyden, 'the Chair which now covers his Infirmities, and which to his own and his Country's lasting disgrace he so shamefully abandoned' and he recalls letters Oliphant 'wrote in his favour to that Renown'd Botanist Dr Hermen, Rector of the University of Leyden'. He is careful to not claim all the credit for this, however, by adding that 'A Great Man was the cause of his promotion', a reference to Pitcairne's patronage by Sir John Dalrymple of Stair (1648-1707), Secretary of State for Scotland.

> Matter was, he owed that to his good friend, who not only enhanced his whole time, some part wherof at least he owed to the young Gentleman entrusted to his Care, but sent him nightly home Reeling with these nauseous Loads he had burthened himself with to comply with his Patron, and to animat [sic] his unwieldy Carcass, which he often, to the scandal of the Whole family, disgorged in his Pupil's Bosom, and gave him of his Cheer what he wanted of his Conversation. This the gentleman, out of kindness to Cheyne concealed, and dismist him on some other Pretexts, which it seems he thought were scarcely good enough, if his Patron had not told they had been back'd by D.O.[58]

This unintentionally comic account, worthy of an episode in Fielding or Smollett, contrasts sharply with the later portraits of Cheyne as a champion of temperance. But no matter how inaccurate it serves to suggest something of the youthful follies which were, by his own admission, to lead to his conversion to a life of sobriety.

The story of Cheyne's disgraceful behaviour might easily be dismissed as malicious gossip, but Oliphant repeats the story, naming the employer, in two letters to Pitcairne's friend Captain Robert Bennet (1644-1722), in early December 1702: 'This blade [Cheyne] was some years in Ingliston's family where he had it seems a mind to Remain, but was dismist for the reasons told in the Answer, which I was informed of by Ingliston himself several times'.[59] This confirms the anecdotal claims of early biographers that Cheyne was a tutor in a gentleman's family when he first began to study medicine under Pitcairne and accords with Cheyne's own account of having written his New Theory in a place 'in the country' away from books and friends.[60] Oliphant thanked Bennet for sympathy over the latter's treatment in 'Cheynes villainous paper'. He encloses 'six copies of such an Answer as I thought it deserved, you may easily believe I was so full of Indignation that my Spleen was more than my fancy when I was to write on the subject [his Short Answer]'.[61]

---

58 A Short Answer to Two Lybels Lately Published Against D.O. by Drs. Cheyne and Pitcairn, (Edinburgh ?, 1702), pp. 4-5.

59 Oliphant to Bennet, 11 December 1702, SRO, GD. 205, fol.34, Box 4/3.

60 EH, pp. ii-iii. Biographia Britannica (1784), states that 'it was in consequence of Dr Pitcairn's advice, that Dr Cheyne was induced to quit the study of theology for that of physic. He was at that time a tutor in a private Gentleman's family' (IV, addenda). The original seat of the Ingliston family, Ingliston House in West Lothian, six miles from Edinburgh, was occupied by a number of families in the late seventeenth century. The Barony of Ingliston was established in 1631, but after the death, in 1640, of James Inglis of Ingliston, his son Sir Alexander began to break up the estate. In 1684 it was bought by Hugh Wallace W. S., Paymaster of the Royal Forces in Scotland. Cheyne probably tutored Wallace's son who inherited the estate in 1760. The father would have been a colleague of Bennet who was the Dean of the Faculty of Advocates from 1698 to 1712 (Col. J. A. Symon, The Story of Ingliston, (Edinburgh, 1958) and The Inventory of the Title Deeds of the Lands and Barony of Ingliston, a xeroxed account book available in the Edinburgh Room of Edinburgh Central Library). It has been stated inaccurately by Viets (p. 439), and others that Cheyne was in the household of the Duke of Roxburghe when he met Pitcairne. For new information on Cheyne's relations with Roxburghe see Chapter 2.

61. Pitcairne to Robert Bennet, SRO G.D. 205/34/4.

A week later, Oliphant answered a missing reply from Bennet requesting more details of the case. He argues that he is not guilty of being the 'first aggressor in this whole affair', explaining that he first crossed Pitcairne's path when the latter was going to Leyden and Oliphant himself was returning from France. Oliphant owed Pitcairne nothing for the establishment of his practice which had been going two years before Pitcairne's return and marriage to Dr Stevenson's daughter: 'He met with some difficulty in that affair and was without a great deal of jealousy tho' without any ground, that I was his rival which made him ever at that time allmost my open enemy'. Pitcairne used his father-in-law's influence, 'currying the favour and applause of all the busy people both in the town and the country, as agents, pedagogues, chamberlains, through Country physicians and Surgeons and in effect all such as use to have influence in families'. Oliphant claims that Pitcairne attempted to undermine his practice and reputation and arranged for the publication of the pamphlets in which 'I am attack'd most brutally without any provocation or so much as Cheyne's acquaintance'. [62] We cannot say if Oliphant was as innocent as he claims, but his account does give a fresh insight into Pitcairne's animosity towards Oliphant and motives for remaining in Edinburgh after his marriage.

Johnston's A Reply to Dr Oliphant's Refutation of the Short Answer, (Edinburgh, 1702), contains some trivial arguments over who began the insults, but he also addresses a more important issue by defending Pitcairne's medical theories as theologically orthodox.[63] This was a theme which particularly concerned the young Cheyne. Pitcairne's religious beliefs had long been a familiar cause for concern amongst the Presbyterian establishment who accused him of being a deist if not an outright atheist: a serious charge if we remember that in 1697 the young apprentice of an Edinburgh apothecary, Thomas Aikenhead had been hanged for blasphemy. Even allowing for political prejudice behind these reports, Pitcairne's published and private writings lead me to agree with John Macqueen when he asserts that 'Pitcairne became virtually a free-thinker'.[64] Inevitably the accusations of infidelity informed the attacks upon his medical reforms. Typically Oliphant had argued that Pitcairne

---

62 Ibid..

63 He maintains that Oliphant's attack upon Pitcairne and Cheyne in his 'dissertation' was in the press before Cheyne's second edition of A New Theory, printed in London, arrived in Edinburgh. Therefore, Johnston argues, Oliphant rather than Cheyne, was the first aggressor. It it true to say that the first edition contains none of the vitriolic personal comments included in the second published at a distance in London in 1702.

64 Macqueen, Progress and Poetry, p. 4. Whilst this is not the place to examine the scattered and complex evidence for Pitcairne's religious allegiances and beliefs (which were not necessarily consistent), it should be noted that G. S. Rousseau's recent description of Pitcairne as an 'Enthusiast' is misleading (*IDC*, p. 87). See below, Chapter 2 for further clarification.

'bantered with Scripture...calling it a Syrophenician [sic] story'. This and similar remarks in the pamphlets allude to the anonymous and controversial Epistola Archimedis ad Regem Gelonem, Albae Gracae Reperta (Amsterdam, 1688), in which Pitcairne had cast doubt upon the historical veracity of the Scriptures and the supernatural nature of the Trinity. This had originally been planned to appear next to the related *Sol utio Problematia de Historici,* (Edinburgh, 1688), which later appeared as a chapter in Pitcairne's Dissertations, (translated into English as *A Solution of the Problem Concerning Inventors* in Pitcairne's Works (1715) (pp. 135-63). Pitcairne's chief concern here was to refute the use of classical medical texts to support the argument that the Ancients had anticipated Harvey's discovery of blood circulation. He achieves this by putting the means by which we can assess the credibility of an historical text under empirical scrutiny in what amounts to a neglected exercise in sceptical historiography which clearly anticipates the work of Scottish Enlightenment historians, Hume, Robertson and Stuart.[65] Pitcairne's rigo rous arguments for testing the veracity of historical evidence had obvious applications to Scriptural exegesis and suggest a sceptical attitude to the proofs of revealed religion. They anticipate those later put forward by Hume in his controversial essay 'of Miracles'.[66] When the Epistola was re-issued in 1706, it prompted the Presbyterian Thomas Halyburton D.D. (1674-1712), to devote his 1710 inaugural *Oration*, as newly appointed Professor of Divinity at St Andrews, to a condemnation of Pitcairne as the chief promoter of the rampant deism polluting the religious life of Scotland.[67] Amidst resistance to his protégés being given professorships at Aberdeen and St Andrews, Pitcairne cynically tells his patron Lord Mar, that 'Medicine belongs to Mathematics, and Divinite to South-britain'.[68]

Throughout the 1690s Pitcairne planned to write what he called a 'Relligio [sic] mathematici, or Euclidis', an account of the philosophical basis of natural religion (if written, not extant), which, as he told Gregory, he feared would be so controversial that it would have to be published posthumously:

---

65 Pitcairne's account of the importance of the heart as a centre for the circulation of life-blood and his emphasis upon hereditary traits in his account of animal reproduction are full of political metaphors which invite a reading of them as a barely disguised defence of Jacobite ideology regarding the Divine Right of Kings and the question of Royal succession.

66 First published in Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding (1750) (later An Enquiry). Pitcairne's role as a forerunner of Hume is the subject of a paper I have in preparation.

67 Hiscock, p. 35-6. Halyburton Oratio Inauguralis Habita Andreapoli etc. (Edinburgh, 1714); Natural Religion Insufficient (1714), and 'The Memoirs of Thomas Halyburton' in his Works (1835), p. 793.

68 Pitcairne to Mar, 25 May 1706 in Johnston Letters, p. 45.

> If I write it, I'l certainlie laugh in my grave if i can but understand then what a work there shall be made to answer it by those who'l not understand it. The paper (if ever I write it) shall be ane immortal confutation of poperie and every thing that smells of poperie.[69]

He was particularly interested in Newton's work on theology and sacred history and repeatedly urged Gregory 'to procur me a scheme of Mr. Neuton's divine thoughts, (I'l hope yee'l not laugh), that I may write a demonstration for our religion...'.(but he continues sarcastically) '...this will be a tale of two drinks. For I am confident tho that better things may be said to that purposes than hitherto has been said'.[70] By 1706 Pitcairne was writing to Gregory: 'For God's sake keep Sir Isaac at work, that wee may have... his thoughts about God [etc.], I am clear that metaphysics can never prove a Deity, and therfor think our churchmen here have no ground not to be Atheists'.[71] Pitcairne believed that theology could only rest upon arguments rooted in the empirical findings of natural philosophy and did not hide his contempt for arguments defending revealed religion based upon the absolute historical truth of Scripture.

Cheyne's sophisticated interest in theology and metaphysics developed within this controversial atmosphere. His Remarks on the two Late Pamphlets written by Dr Oliphant, against Dr Pitcairn's Dissertations etc. (Edinburgh, 1702), show an anxiety to address himself to this controversy regarding the theological orthodoxy of Pitcairne's promotion of Newtonianism. He argues that his patron's *Dissertations* 'demonstrat the *Infinite Wisdom* of the CONTRIVER of the Universe of which the Animal Body is the noblest part. That GOD ALMIGHTY has adjusted the whole by weight and measure; that the same uniformity and simplicity shines through all his *works* of *wonder* : that the same laws of *Mechanism* are observed in the lesser and in the greater bodies of this *System*' (p. 2). To confirm Pitcairne's orthodoxy Cheyne cites three Christian virtuosi 'three of the *Greatest Men* of the CHURCH of ENGLAND, (I mean Bp. Wilkins, Dr Hooper Dean of Canterbury, and the most ingenious Mr. John Craig )', who 'have all said the same thing more Explicitly and

---

69 Ibid, pp. 18-19.

70 Ibid., p. 19. (to Gray, 1694). He closes: 'I am serious in seeking ane account of Neuton's thoughts anent differences in religion, for I am truely resolved to doe something that way'.

71 He adds 'but for this, get a sight of Cromarties book that I have sent to Roxburgh'. Johnston, Letters, p. 43. Johnston does not identify this allusion to an obscure work by George Mackenzie, Earl of Cromartie (1630-1714), entitled misleadingly A Bundle of Papers, Partly Self-Evident, partly Problematick raised from Occasional Meditations (1705). This collection of arbitrarily bound essays in the NLS, printed for private circulation, begins with the occasional piece to which Pitcairne refers: *A Right Use of Reason Against Atheists and Deists* (1705). In a cumberous argument that religion 'stands on a surer Word of prophecy, than what Sense can perceive, or [fallen] human Reason can argue, or Flesh and Blood, i.e. humane Nature, can discover' (p.i), Mackenzie gets embroiled in the outmoded scholastic terminology which Pitcairne rejects as useless metaphysics.

distinctly, and if these are not a match for you and your ENGLISH INTERPRETERS, I despair of ever seeing you match'd' (p. 31).[72] Dr John Craige F.R.S. (d.1731), a fellow Scot and a friend of both Cheyne and Pitcairne, was a mathematician-churchman whom Cheyne was probably already consulting over the composition of his Philosophical Principles (1705) (to be discussed in chapter 2). Cheyne's use of Wilkins, Hooper, and Craige as authorities probably reflects his discovery in England that Newtonianism was already accepted as theologically sound by many Anglican divines. His defence of the faith may well have been motivated as much by the pressures of patronage as piety, but however sincerely, Cheyne found his model for a marriage between Newtonianism and religion in the work of the 'Christian Virtuosi' of the Royal Society and the influential Boyle Lectures (1692-1714), established by the will of Wilkins' friend Robert Boyle.[73] Cheyne's use of the argument from design, was often employed by the Boyle Lecturers and the popular physico-theologians John Ray (1627-1705) and William Derham (1657-1735).[74] Cheyne's first substantial work, the Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion (1705), in which he makes a far more extensive use of the arguments both *from* and *to* design was closely modelled on the work of these English Christian virtuosi within whose circle Cheyne now tried to establish himself.[75]

As Oliphant's letter at the head of this chapter noted, Cheyne had obtained a degree of M.D. *gratis* from King's College Aberdeen on 8 September 1701, before departing for England. There was in fact no formal medical teaching at Aberdeen at this time, but the College record of the conferring of this honour on Cheyne is revealing:[76]

---

[72] Bishop John Wilkins (1614-72), was a founder member of the Royal Society and one of the earliest scientist-theologians to formulate the concept of 'Natural Religion' which he defined in his influential Principles and Duties of Natural Religion (1675). He did not reject the value of revelation and scriptural interpretation.

[73] For 'Christian Virtuosi', R. S. Westfall Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England (Yale, 1957). For Newtonianism and the Boyle Lectures, Margaret C. Jacobs, The Newtonians and the English Revolution 1689-1720, (1976) esp. chapters 4 and 5. Jacobs' study has not been superseded although her claim that Newtonianism was only adopted by Latitudinarians has been questioned. In particular I endorse Guerrini's comment that the strong Episcopalian and High-Church adherences of the Pitcairne-Gregory circle undermines such a clear association (*Thesis*, pp. 31-2 etc.).

[74] Ray's most popular works were Physico-Theological Discourses (1693 and revised 1713) and The Wisdom of God (1691, enlarged 1701, 1704). Derham's were The Artificial Clock-Maker: Physico Theology (Boyle Lecture, 1696) and Astro-Theology (1714).

[75] These two types of argument, as used by Newton and his contemporaries, are analysed in R. H. Hurlbutt Hume, Newton and the Design Argument (Nebraska, 1965), Chapter 1.

[76] To practice medicine within Edinburgh, Cheyne would have had to become a member of the R.C.P.E which would have required a degree from a Scottish University or equivalent, but his association with Pitcairne, who was not reinstated into the College until 1704, effectively barred him from membership. Cheyne was eventually granted honorary membership in 1724, ten years after

> Mr. George Cheyne allowed to *graduat*, because he's not onely our owne countrymen, and at present not rich, but is recommended by the ablest and most learned Physicians in Edinburgh as one of the best mathematicians in Europe; and for his skill in medicine he hath given a sufficient indication of by the learned Tractat, *De Febribus*, which hath made him famous abroad as well as at home; and he being just now going to England upon invitation of some of the members of the Royal Society.[77]

Pitcairne (whose attempts to place his colleagues in academic positions throughout the Scottish colleges are well-documented in his surviving letters), was instrumental in getting Cheyne this degree. Oliphant had Cheyne in mind when in 1702 he publicly expressed his disgust at seeing 'the Study of Medicine dwindle to that of a piece of Abstract Geometry' amongst 'a Number of Little Pedants that, without any tolerable Education...could procure from a University a Patent, and talking Loudly of curves and Quadratures set up for Physicians'.[78] In fact such a proceeding was very common, and should not be taken as an indication that Cheyne was any more of a quack than many of his fellow members of the Faculty.

Pitcairne was also instrumental in obtaining a welcome for Cheyne amongst the inner-circle of English scientists. In a letter of recommendation to Sir Hans Sloane, Secretary of the Royal Society, dated 29 October 1701, Pitcairne apologises for the gap in their 'virtuosi' correspondence: 'I could not return an answer that might satisfie either yow or my self. Now I send yow a present of the bearer who is a knowing man, & good mathematician. He is very desirous to be knowne to yow a patron of learn'd men...I beg yee may doe what Kindness yee can to my Friend Mr. Cheyne'. [79] Along with this letter Cheyne carried to London some geological specimens obtained by Pitcairne for Sloane's famous natural history collection, and a presentation copy of Pitcairne's Dissertationes. Despite his ingenuous hopes to the contrary, the controversy that surrounded Cheyne at Edinburgh followed him South and became a hallmark of his career in England.

---

Pitcairne's death and in direct response to the publication of his Essay of Health (1724), where significantly he apologises for his behaviour in the fever dispute.

77 Fasti Aberdonenses: 1494-1854. Selections from the Records of the University of King's College Aberdeen (Aberdeen, Spalding Club, 1854), pp. 440-1. *De Febribus* was probably a Latin version of Cheyne's essay on fevers.

78 Oliphant, A Short Answer to Two Lybels (Edinburgh, 1702), p.7.

79 Johnston, Letters, p. 37.

# 2

# LONDON: 1701-1705

## Introduction: 'Bottle Companions'

> Lord Castlewood's own gloom did not wear off, or his behaviour alter...he accounted for it himself by saying that he was out of health; that he wanted to see his physician; that he would go to London and consult Dr Cheyne. (Thackeray, Henry Esmond (1852), Ch. XIV.)

When Lord Castlewood set out on his fictitious two-day journey to London with Harry Esmond on Monday 11 October 1700, he would have had to wait just over a year for his consultation with his physician, for, despite Thackeray's historical accuracy in naming Cheyne as the most famous early eighteenth-century 'nerve doctor', he was a little remiss with his dates. In fact, Cheyne first arrived in London sometime after November 1701 and before 20 January 1702, on which date he was writing a letter of self-introduction from London to David Gregory. This was one of his earliest moves in what proved to be Cheyne's five-year struggle to insinuate himself into the inner-circle of Newton's followers. Once in England, he immediately fell in with other exiled Scottish medical men, many of them correspondents and former pupils of Pitcairne, who frequented the coffee-houses and taverns of the capital. As will soon emerge, it was the most famous of these 'scientific wits', Dr John Arbuthnot, who had helped lure Cheyne south with hopes of Newton's patronage. Cheyne left no record of his personal expectations upon arrival in England but all we can deduce from his activities suggest that he was an ambitious social climber, eager to compensate for what was probably his political and religious marginalization in Presbyterian Scotland. Certainly the accession of Anne, a Stuart, revived political hopes amongst Cheyne's Episcopalian circle.

Amongst Pitcairne's associates in England Cheyne befriended Dr Robert Gray, Dr John Freind (1675-1728), Dr Richard Mead (1673-1754), and Dr Robert Erskine (1677-1720). Gray is an obscure figure. Although a close confidante of Pitcairne he never published anything on iatro-mechanics.[1] Erskine probably met Cheyne in Edinburgh where he had been an apprentice surgeon.[2] By 1704 Cheyne's college

---

[1] Gray handled the London end of Pitcairne's pamphlet publishing schemes. A collection of his papers reveals much of Pitcairne but little of Gray (BL, Sloane MS 3198).

[2] Letters and Documents Relating to Robert Erskine ed. by Rev. R. Paul, in Miscellany of the Scottish History Society II, 44, pp. 37-430. Some of Pitcairne's letters to Erskine and Mead of 1702-3 mention Cheyne (originals in the Leningrad Academy of Science, transcripts by Dr Appleby on deposit in Royal Society Archive).

friend, Dr Archibald Stuart, at the time travelling the world as a ship's physician, was writing to Erskine from Her Majesty's Hospital in Jamaica that 'I suppose you frequently see Dr Cheyne and I shall be very glad to hear from him. I think he is a letter in my debt, pray give him my service'.[3] We do not know if Cheyne kept in touch after Erskine left for Russia later that year to take up the post of physician to Tsar Peter the Great, for whom he arranged the purchase of Pitcairne's library from the Doctor's widow in 1713-4. Cheyne later knew Stuart as a Royal Physician.

Mead was something of an exception amongst Pitcairne's followers in so far as he was a Whig dissenter rather than an Anglican Tory. In the preface to his Mechanical Account of Poisons (1702), he praises Cheyne, alongside Pitcairne and the Italian iatro-mechanists, and presents the work as a contribution towards the *Principia Medicae*.[4] According to Gregory, Mead's later essay De Imperio Solis ac Lunae in Corpora Humana et Morbis inde Oruindis (1704), was based upon a paper by Cheyne making analogies between Newton's theory of the tides and 'the tides in the air'. As Guerrini notes, although Halley could find 'not one right or sensible word' in Cheyne's paper, he later published a translation of Mead's version.[5] Pitcairne, Grey, Erskine, Mead and Cheyne were all in close correspondence over medical matters and were particularly anxious to exchange anatomical observations which supported their shared iatro-mechanical theories.

Dr John Freind was also an intimate friend from soon after Cheyne's arrival in England. Freind, a Christ Church scholar and protégé of Dean Aldrich and Atterbury, had supported Boyle against Bentley in the Phalaris controversy.[6] Freind is acknowledged alongside Arbuthnot for helping Cheyne prepare the manuscript of his Principles (1705). By 1710 Cheyne also knew Dr Freind's brother Robert (1667-1751), the headmaster of Westminster School (from 1711), whose dinner-table became a frequent meeting place for the Tory wits.[7] Through Freind, Keill and Gregory, Cheyne also associated with the Tory circle at Christ Church, Oxford. The

---

[3] Ibid, p. 397.

[4] Pitcairne provided Mead with case-histories for this work. Mead turned away from theoretical work and became an extremely successful physician. He condemned Cheyne's dietary regimen, but they occasionally worked on the same cases (Porter EM, Intro., pp. ix-x and Bulloch, p. 15).

[5] Guerrini, *Isaac Newton etc.* p. 230.

[6] Freind was implicated in the Atterbury Plot and consequently compiled his History of Physick as a prisoner in the Tower in 1723. His Whig colleague Dr Mead used his influence with Walpole to gain Freind's release. In 1727 a year before his death became a Royal Physician. Cheyne's political position throughout this period is obscure, but he consulted Freind as late as 1727.

[7] On 1 February 1712 Swift reported to Stella that he dined there with Atterbury, Prior and Dr Freind. It seems more than probable that Cheyne, whose health revived around 1711, was present on similar occasions. Cheyne was in the company of Dr Robert Freind, when he was called from Bath to attend his kinsman Bishop Gilbert Burnet in September 1710 (HMC Portland MS, IV, pp. 58-4).

College Canon, Dr William Stratford, later wrote familiarly of 'my old friend Dr Cheyney' to Edward Harley, IInd Lord Oxford (1689-1741). By 1710 Harley, (Pope and Swift's intimate patron), was himself acquainted with Cheyne who unwittingly asked to join 'in the next subscription to the South Sea Stock'.[8]

Cheyne was presented with a model of worldly success in the flourishing career of his compatriot Arbuthnot, who in 1709 was appointed Physician in Ordinary to Queen Anne.[9] When the Scriblerian Club was formed in 1711-12, Cheyne was probably already acquainted with some of its members and patrons through Arbuthnot, but unfortunately the earliest evidence of such associations (primarily in Pope's correspondence), dates from the early 1720s onwards. Cheyne was a particular friend of John Gay, who wrote in his *Welcome from Greece,* addressed to Pope in March 1720 (upon the completion of his translation of Homer), of 'wondering Maine so fat, with laughing eyes/ (Gay, Maine, and Cheney, boon companions dear,/ Gay fat, Maine fatter, Cheney huge of size)'.[10] But there is no other evidence of Cheyne and Gay's friendship, perhaps because, being frequently together, they never corresponded. Although Swift never mentions Cheyne, it is noticeable that the physician was never a target for the Dean's acerbic pen and a good-natured former intimacy is suggested by the fact that Cheyne included Swift's name in a genial quip he made against the gluttonous habits of Pope's circle delivered privately through Lyttelton in 1736.[11] All we know of Cheyne's intimacy with Pope dates from the last decade of their lives (and is discussed later), but this was clearly a long-standing friendship. Although we do not know if Cheyne played any significant part in the literary projects of the Scriblerians, his correspondence reveals a scholar with wide interests in both the scientific and literary spheres.

When Cheyne first arrived in England his reputation rested on rumours of his exceptional mathematical abilities. On 28 March 1702 the Nonjuror Dr Thomas Smith, keeper of the Cottonian Library, Oxford, writing to his friend Samuel Pepys, reported that:

---

[8] HMC Portland MSS, VII, p. 279 and 335; and IV, p. 584. Cheyne's quietist friend Dr James Keith also enjoyed Harley's patronage and was closely associated with High-Churchmen at Oxford (Henderson, Mystics, pp. 58-9). By 1720 Cheyne was treating Harley's wife, Lady Henrietta Cavendish (BL Sloane MS 4291, f. 237).

[9] By 1711, Arbuthnot had met Swift and begun The History of John Bull (1712). In the same year, 1711, along with Dr John Freind (1675-1728), and Matthew Prior (both associates of Pitcairne), Swift and Arbuthnot were recruited into 'The Brothers Club', in an attempt to create a Tory counter-part to the Kit-Kat Club.

[10] Gay, Poetry and Prose, p. 254, xiv, 132-4. Maine remains unidentified.

[11] Pope, Corr, IV, p. 47. G. S. Rousseau points to the fact that though an obvious target Cheyne is never satirised by the Scriblerians (*IDC*, p. 82n.).

> Cheney's booke, containing the doctrine of fluxions and other abstruse parts of Geometry, hangs stil in the presse, there being hitherto but slow advances made in it by reason of the compesitors' unaquaintedness with such unusual and difficult worke. His countrymen cry him up as a great master in this sort of learning, and it may not be too undeservedly, Mr Newton, I heare, concurring in the same character'.[12]

Smith sent with this letter a copy of John Keill's Oxford lectures Introductio ad Veram Physicam (1702). Keill had studied mathematics under Gregory at Edinburgh and in 1699 followed his master down to Oxford, where he became deputy to Thomas Millington, the Sedleian Prof. of Natural Philosophy.[13] He is credited with being the first person to publicly teach Newtonian philosophy and his Oxford lectures were highly influential in the dissemination of Newtonianism. Smith's letter is further evidence of Cheyne drawing the attention of David Gregory's Oxford circle in which Cheyne seems to have been seen as as rival for places and patronage.

Smith was referring to a treatise on fluxions which Cheyne published in 1703 as Fluxionem Methodus Inversa: sive Quantitatum Fluentium Leges Generaliores. Earlier, on 18 March 1702, Cheyne was elected a fellow of the Royal Society but he never contributed directly to their Transactions, although he was associated socially with many fellows. This may be accounted for by his subsequent illhealth, but in part it probably also reflects what proved to be (despite Smith's remarks to Pepys), Cheyne's uneasy relationship with his hero, and the Society's President from 1704, Sir Isaac Newton. The nature of his contact with Newton has been subject to various interpretations and, despite published evidence to the contrary, overlooked in some discussions of Cheyne's career.[14] The few scholars to have examined Cheyne's early work in any detail, all agree that Cheyne (mainly on account of what they term his anachronistic adherence to 'Neo-Platonic' analogies), was a particularly idiosyncratic member of the circle of first generation Newtonians. However, despite his later 'mystical' interests it should be stressed that Cheyne remained loyal to essentially Newtonian explanations of natural phenomena. In order to untangle these anomalies we may begin by considering Cheyne's personal relations with Newton and his closest followers. Regrettably the documentary evidence for this period of his career is scant or resistant to interpretation. Much of our information regarding Cheyne's early

---

[12] The Private Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Samuel Pepys: 1679-1703 ed. by J. R. Tanner, 2 vols (1926), II, p. 258 (Letter 477, MSS iv. 95). Cheyne is presumably the 'Mr Cheney' who is 'very ambitious of kissing your hands' in another letter from Smith to Pepys written some six or so weeks later but we do not know if he ever met the famous diarist (Ibid. p. 262).

[13] When Gregory died in October 1708, Arbuthnot was involved in an attempt to get Keill elected to the Chair of Astronomy as Gregory's replacement. This first attempt failed, but after a short absence in the service of Anne's ministry, Keill returned to Oxford in 1712 and gained the Savilian Professorship a post he remained in until his death (Aitken, p. 33).

[14] See, for example, Bowles *Attraction*, p. 481.

activities in England comes from Gregory's *Memoranda*, which are quite clearly biased against Cheyne.[15] The most crucial matter to emerge is that Cheyne arrived in England with word of Newton's approval for his paper on fluxions.

**The Inverse Method of Fluxions: 1703**

The earliest extant letter from Cheyne was written at London on 20 January 1702 to Gregory. It is principally concerned with Cheyne's plans for the publication of his 'Inverse Method'.[16] In what is obviously Cheyne's overture to Gregory, he gives a detailed account of the inception and content of his mathematical treatise. 'About two years ago' at the express desire of Pitcairne, he had drawn up 'the General rules of the Inverse Method of Fluxions' and then returned the resulting paper in the form of a letter to Pitcairne, who sent it on to Arbuthnot with instructions that it be shown 'to Mr Newton, and to ask his advice if he thought it worth printing'. As Cheyne explains: 'Mr Newton (whether it were that he could not give himself the trouble of peruseing it but slightly as I have reason to believe, or not to disoblige Dr Pitcairne who seemed to put some value on it, by offering it to the view of such a great man) thought it not intolerable; which when Dr Pitcairne understood he would have it printed'.[17] Cheyne's obligations to Pitcairne were such that he was reluctant to refuse him anything but 'haveing a greater design in my head than this paper can signifie, I was loath to let it pass so'. Consequently, he persuaded Arbuthnot to delay the publication until he arrived in London. Cheyne then innocuously confessed to Gregory that 'necessity, which begets so many bad authors has forced me to let it go and I am about publishing it'.

Many years later Arbuthnot told Conduitt (Newton's first biographer), of a meeting he orchestrated between Newton and Cheyne, the author of 'an ingenious book on mathematics', who 'had not the money to print it'. According to Arbuthnot,

---

[15] David Gregory, Isaac Newton and their Circle, ed., W. G. Hiscock, (Oxford, 1937). I support Guerrini's suggestion that Gregory's hostility to Cheyne was primarily personal. The fact that Oliphant was Gregory's brother-in-law cannot have predisposed Gregory towards Cheyne, despite their mutual friendship with Pitcairne. Cheyne's subsequent sycophantic behaviour amongst the English Newtonians probably compacted Gregory's prejudices: he was notoriously jealous of his own relationship with Newton and clearly saw Pitcairne's protégé Cheyne as a direct rival for the patronage he sought for Keill.

[16] This letter, found inserted into Gregory's copy of Fluxionem Methodus Inversa is printed as an appendix in Hiscock, Memoranda, pp. 43-5. Below I am not concerned with fully evaluating Cheyne's work on the calculus within the context of the historical development of mathematics, a task for which I am utterly unqualified, but rather wish to consider the circumstances surrounding the publication of this work as part of an attempt to understand the movement of Cheyne's early career and his relations with Newton.

[17] Hiscock, Memoranda, Appendix, p. 43.

Sir Isaac said 'Bring it to me', but 'when the manuscript was brought to him, he offered Cheyne a bag of money, which he refused, and "Newton would see him no more"'.[18] The reasons behind Cheyne's bizarre, and, in career terms, disastrous refusal and Newton's typically effronted dismissal are to be found in the contents of the paper itself.[19] To Gregory, Cheyne describes the piece as merely an extrapolation of work on the calculus already published by Newton and Gregory. Isolating Gregory (whose work was entirely based on Newton's), from amongst the circle of British and Continental mathematicians working in this field, was a blatant attempt at flattery on Cheyne's part. His partisan attitude was compacted by his subsequent failure, in the published treatise, to acknowledge any debt to the Continental mathematicians with whose work he was also already familiar (as his asides in his letter to Gregory indicate). In Europe this infuriated followers of Leibniz, notably the Swiss mathematician Johan Bernoulli (1667-1748), the Professor of Mathematics at Groningen, who quoted Cheyne's printed conclusion in a letter to Leibniz:

> When I turn over in my mind all these discoveries of the great Newton, I cannot prevent myself from declaring that all which has been published by others during the last twenty four years, roughly speaking, relating to these methods or to other not dissimilar methods, is only a repetition or an easy corollary of what Newton long ago communicated to his friends or the public.[20]

This blindly patriotic claim had already appeared, in almost identical wording, in Cheyne's letter to Gregory where he added (significantly in the retrospective light of the resulting controversy), that this is 'the part which Mr Newton would have altered but I am not for doing it unless you think otherwise'.[21]

Newton, with more tact than his disciple, obviously tried, but failed, to get the sycophantic Cheyne to tone down his extravagant claims. We do not have to look very far for what was probably the driving force behind Cheyne's xenophobic attitude. Pitcairne, writing to Colin Campbell on 1 October, 1703, remarks that:

---

[18] Sir David Brewster Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1855, reprinted 1965), II, p. 413.

[19] The following account owes much to that of Rupert Hall's study of the Calculus Dispute, Philosophers at War (Cambridge, 1980), Chapter 7.

[20] C. I. Gerhardt, Die Philsophischen Schriften von G. W. Leibniz, 7 vols (Berlin, 1875-90, reprinted Hildesheim, 1960), II, Part II, p. 724.

[21] Hiscock, Memoranda, p. 45. Keill is notable for being one of the few outspoken High-Church Tories in Newton's inner-circle. See David Kubrin's important article on Keill in DSB VII, pp. 275-277. For the significance of his career in the context of the Pitcairne-Gregory circle in which Cheyne himself moved in Oxford and London see Guerrini, *Thesis*, p. 147; 160-70, and *Keill* passim.

> Mr Neuton is printing his Optics...he adds to this book all his about quadratures. he has done it in ire, being barbarouslie, orangically, & Hanoverianlie abus'd for his principia by a German latelie in a vile consubstantial book of nonsense & ill-nature.[22]

It is interesting to compare this comment with that of Gregory who claimed that, as a result of the publication of Cheyne's book on fluxions, 'Mr Newton was provoked to publish his Quadratures, and with it, his Light and Colours, etc.'.[23] Both Pitcairne and Gregory refer to the publication of The Opticks in 1704, to which Newton appended an old paper on 'the Quadrature of Curves'. Rupert Hall, historian of the Newton-Leibniz controversy, suggests that such a reaction from Newton is so entirely in keeping with his character that it is 'too typical to be put down as mere gossip'.[24] Cheyne's role in the issue is also in keeping with what we know of his character at this time. It seems likely that Pitcairne, who had originally pressed for its publication, covered the cost of printing Cheyne's provocative paper.

As Hall illustrates, Cheyne's overzealous partisanship towards Newton served to bring to the boil a priority dispute which had been simmering for some years amongst the respective followers of Newton and Leibniz.[25] With John Keill eventually stepping in as Newton's defender, the ensuing 'Calculus Dispute' continued to rage, long after Cheyne himself had politely given up mathematics for more religious concerns and a fashionable medical practice. Despite his anger, in 1703, Bernoulli was describing Cheyne's Methodus Inversa to Leibniz as 'a most remarkable little book, stuffed with very clever discoveries; I know of no-one in Britain since Newton who has penetrated so far into these deeper levels of geometry'.[26] Whilst Cheyne was remiss in acknowledging the mathematical achievements of others, Bernoulli was probably being over-generous in this initial assessment of Cheyne's sophisticated but confused contribution. Because of the ensuing controversy, responses to Cheyne's 'Inverse Method' were, if anything, even less encouraging amongst the British Newtonians, and the work had little lasting influence. However, as Whiteside, the eminent historian of mathematics, puts it, Cheyne's work was

> a competent and comprehensive survey of recent developments in the field of "inverse fluxions" not merely in Britain, at the hands of Newton, David Gregory and John Craige, but

---

[22] Johnston, Letters, p. 38-9.
[23] Hiscock, Memoranda, p. 15.
[24] R. Hall Philosophers at War, p. 135.
[25] Bernoulli was typical of the Continental mathematicians in finding Cheyne's claims outrageous, telling Leibniz that Cheyne wishes us all to be 'Newton's apes, uselessly retracing his steps of long before'. He specifically alerted Leibniz to Cheyne's suggestion that the method published by Leibniz in 1673 had been discovered by Newton at least seventeen years earlier. See C. I. Gerdhart, Die Philosophischen Schriften, III, Part II, p. 724. Quoted in Hall, p. 132, which see for further responses.
[26] 23-9-1703, Gerhardt, III, Part II, pp. 723-4.

> also by Leibniz and Johann Bernouilli on the Continent, and drew the assemblage together and systematized it with proofs and elaborations of Cheyne's own contrivance.[27]

Newton, perhaps feeling slighted, rallied the London-domiciled Huguenot mathematician Abraham De Moivre (1667-1754), to condemn the work in his Animadversiones in D.Georgii Cheynaei tractatum de Fluxionum Methodus Inversa (1704). In May 1703, having been alerted that De Moivre had 'a mind to show his parts upon my late Mathematical book', Cheyne wrote to Sloane, as Secretary of the Royal Society, asking for what he believed was a member's privilege that nothing was to be allowed to be 'printed in your Transactions against me, or my late Book, without my Knowledge or untill I have seen it, that I may have an Answer ready to anyone's cavills ready to publish with them'.[28] He then reflects:

> No man is infallible and since the only end of my studies is to discover truth, I shall be obliged to anyone who shall inform me better provided he do it mannerly. But being morally certain that my Book contains only errors either of printing or calculation which no man that I ever know escaped in such a work I am the more desirous to see what he says.[29]

Cheyne's worthy claim to be a pure seeker after truth is undercut by the somewhat desperate tone of this letter which betrays an underlying insecurity about his scholarly reputation. One is tempted to ask what other possible errors a mathematical paper could suffer from to save it from being invalid other than those of 'printing and calculation'. Despite his professed desire to avoid dispute, as a true pupil of Pitcairne, Cheyne became engaged in protracted arguments over the validity of his work, responding publicly to De Moivre's criticisms in Animadversiones Ab. De. Moivre in Librum G. Cheynei (1705). Privately Cheyne had a realistic view of the value of an excercise for which, as Rupert Hall notes, he never made any claims to originality. To Gregory he actually wrote, 'this paper will certainly be incorrect, because I have none to Inform [me] of my mistakes and none is fit to correct his own errors'.[30]

Pitcairne at least valued Cheyne's Methodus Inversa. He donated a copy to the Edinburgh Advocate's Library, and when sending a copy to Colin Campbell he remarked 'Dr. Cheyn's book is yours by gift, & a very small gift too tho the book is

---

[27] D. T. Whiteside, The Mathematical Papers of Isaac Newton, 8 vols (Cambridge, 1967-81), VIII, pp. 15-21. T. M. Brown's description of the Methodus Inversa, in his article on Cheyne for the DSB (III, p. 244), as 'a work on Calculus of dubious mathematical validity' in which Gregory found '429 errors' is based upon a misreading of a note by Gregory which in fact refers to Cheyne's Philosophical Principles (1705), (these errors were mostly accidentals, Hiscock, p. 25). Gregory's complimentary copy of Methodus Inversa in Christ Church Library contains no annotations.

[28] BL, Sloane MS 4039, f. 135.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Hiscock, Memoranda, p. 45.

great'.[31] Cheyne's own final verdict on the work was hardly inflated. Describing it in his recantation preface of 1724 as 'brought forth in Ambition, and bred up in Vanity', he maintained that 'there are some Things in it Tolerable for the Time' (EH, p. iv). By 1724 he had come to mistrust mathematics upon religious grounds and politely begs forgiveness for the personal rancour in 'the defence of that Book against the learned and acute Mr Abr. de Moivre' which he wrote 'in a Spirit of Levity and resentment' and which he now wishes 'undone so far as it is personal or peevish, and ask him and all the World Pardon for it'. Although Newton owned copies of both the Methodus Inversa, and De Moivre's 'Animadversions', his own verdict on a work, which he had originally offered to patronise, but which became a thorn in his side, does not survive.[32]

A more intimate relationship may have existed between Cheyne and Newton prior to the 'bag of money' incident than has been assumed. On 20 May, 1706, just after the publication of the Optice (Samuel Clarke's official translation of the Opticks), Gregory noted that 'Dr. Cheyne uses to say among his Chronys that all the additions (made by Sr. Isaac Newton to his book of Light & Colours in the Latin version) were stolen from him by Sr. Isaac in private conversation, and that he can give a reason of whatever God made'.[33] As Brown notes in his DSB article, this boastful claim has never been substantiated nor refuted. It is unlikely that it ever can, but it does not deserve to go unexamined. Read in the light of Newton's unrivalled historical stature, the remark appears somewhat absurd, suggesting the complaint of a peevish and failing upstart, but there are certainly no grounds whatsoever for supposing that Cheyne did not converse with Newton over the significant matter of the 1706 *Queries*, where Newton added seven new *Queries*, to the original sixteen.

There are three significant aspects to Newton's revisions to which Cheyne may have been referring. The first, noted by Brown and discussed at length by Guerrini, concerns the question of short-range attractions; a notion that had been bubbling beneath the surface of iatro-mathematical medical theory since Pitcairne read Newton's *De Natura Acidorum* in 1691. Significantly in his discussion of gravitational forces in the Philosophical Principles (1705), Cheyne anticipated, by a year, Newton's tentative 'hypothesis' concerning short-range attraction in the 1706

---

[31] Johnston, Letters, p. 38. Pitcairne's donation copy is NLS, Pressmark L. 9. 11.

[32] J. Harrison, The Library of Sir Isaac Newton (1978), Cat. Items 369 and 371. Newton only refers to Cheyne once in his surviving papers, in a letter concerning the calculus dispute, probably addressed to Sloane in April, 1711, where he complains that everyone describes his 'Book of Quadratures as if it was nothing else but an improvement of what had been found out before by Mr Liebnitz, Dr Sheen and Mr Craig'. Correspondence of Sir Isaac Newton (1975), V, pp. 117-8.

[33] Hiscock, p. 35.

*Queries*, where he appears to be repeating some of Cheyne's examples[34] Guerrini observes that, in his earlier work on fevers, Cheyne had already betrayed his access, through Pitcairne, to Newton's early essay *De Natura Acidorum,* which would have given him a clue to Newton's theory of short-range attraction.[35] She argues that none of Pitcairne's followers, including Cheyne, fully developed the theoretical importance of short-range attraction in their medical writings until after Newton declared himself in the 1706 Optice. It is also significant that in discussing short-range attractions in 1706, Newton revived the concept of the aether. Again this was a theory which in 1705 had Cheyne's tentative approval. Two of the 1706 additions, *Queries* twenty and twenty-three, were particularly concerned with the theological implications of Newton's discoveries. It was probably these that Cheyne had in mind when he made his peculiar claim 'that he can give a reason of whatever God made'. He was perhaps referring to what emerges in 1715 as his strong belief that 'Divine Analogy' was the way to unlock all the mysteries of the universe; a Neo-Platonic methodology Cheyne later used with far more optimistic and poetic abandon than the more cautious, empirical Newton. When he reached London, Cheyne, who had inherited Pitcairne's concern with the religious implications of Newtonianism, had probably had access to Newton's 'thoughts anent religion' that Pitcairne had obtained through Gregory. Newton was again threatened by Cheyne's eagerness to exploit his own incautious interpretations, and was pushed into publishing tentative theories he had long kept back from the public. These are some of the issues behind the obvious rift between Cheyne and Newton. Cheyne gained Newton's attention, but more as an irritating sycophant than as a talent to be nurtured by the master's burgeoning influence.

The tension in Cheyne's contact with Gregory, was undoubtedly exacerbated by Cheyne's refusal to agree to Newton's request for revisions to the Methodus Inversa, and his later claims to have originated ideas in the Optices. In fact Cheyne's career in England, perhaps as a direct result of his political leanings, seems to have been ill-starred from the outset. There is much to suggest that he was financially embarrassed when he left Scotland. He told Gregory that he was unable to supply a copy of his 'Methodus Inversa' because, apart from the one forwarded to Newton, the only other draft had been lost 'with other papers I valued more...on my late dangerous voyage'.[36] This journey was probably made on rough winter seas from Leith. The loss of papers at this juncture may have contributed to his failure to publish anything original upon

---

[34] Bowles mistakenly writes, 'As far is known, Cheyne had no personal contact with Newton, and it seems likely that.[Cheyne], was expressing his own inferences from the gravitational forces demonstrated in the Principia' (Attraction, p. 481-2).

[35] Guerrini, *Keill*, passim.

[36] Hiscock, p. 45.

his arrival in England. Perhaps his fellow countrymen simply overrated his abilities. Certainly he seems to have been forced by the necessity of obliging Pitcairne, to publish something he himself knew to be unworthy of his talents. Whatever the reasons, his ultimate failure to gain the sympathetic attention of Newton or Gregory severely damaged his chances of gaining a public appointment in an English academic institution. Gregory's hostility may also have been due to Cheyne's choice of collaborator at this time, John Craige.

## Cheyne and John Craige

In October 1703, we find Pitcairne warning Dr Gray to 'take notice that Dr Gregorie and Dr Cheyne are not indissoluble friends, but both are mine'. This much is obvious from Gregory's invariably critical memoranda, but in a postscript, Pitcairne adds: 'Also take notice that Mr Craig is very far from being a friend to Dr Gregory, this for Politicks'.[37] The juxtaposition of these comments implies that Cheyne and Gregory did not agree for other than political reasons and we have already considered what may have been the personal cause of Gregory's animosity. By 1702 Cheyne had already named 'the ingenious Revd. Dr John Craige' in print as an authority for the religious orthodoxy of Pitcairne's mathematical 'Newtonianism'. During these early years in England, it is Craige who emerges as Cheyne's greatest confidante and intellectual collaborator. Gregory may have been hostile to Cheyne for taking political sides with Craige, but Craige and Gregory's political differences are obscure. Even if fully unravelled, this would not necessarily prove anything regarding Cheyne's equally veiled politics. Nevertheless, the friendship between Cheyne and Craige deserves examination especially in the light of their mutual collaboration over Cheyne's first substantial work, the Philosophical Principles (1705), and its subsequent revision for an enlarged edition of 1715.

Craige, one of the more obscure first-generation Newtonians, was born somewhere in Scotland (Edinburgh ?), in the latter quarter of the seventeenth century and died in London in 1731.[38] The sparse knowledge we have of his career suggests that nationality and the mutual friendship of Pitcairne apart, Craige shared many intellectual interests with Cheyne. Alongside his clerical role he was primarily a mathematician, making significant contributions to the Royal Society's Transactions, as one of the earliest of Newton's followers to explore the rich potential of the

---

[37] Johnston Letters, p. 39.

[38] J. F. Scott in the DSB, II, pp. 458-459. Other sources are referred to separately.

calculus.[39] Pitcairne corresponded with Craige to keep abreast of the latest 'Newtonian' news in England.[40] On October, 1703, Pitcairne received a complimentary copy of Craige's *Specimen Methodi Generalis Determinandi Figurarum Quadratures* ('Specimen of the General Method of Determining the Quadrature of Figures'), which appeared in the Philosophical Transactions (No 284, March-April), headed by a dedicatory letter to Cheyne. Pitcairne, in turn, lent this to Cheyne's teacher Thomas Bower. He also promised a copy to Colin Campbell, who with the same letter received Cheyne's Methodus.[41] Pitcairne also promised to 'make a correspondence betw'xt yow and him [Cheyne]'. Campbell probably never met Cheyne, but he was an old friend of Craige.[42] Pitcairne was true to his word and Campbell, renewing a lapsed correspondence with Craige, extended this to include Cheyne with whom he also began to correspond separately over scientific and religious matters.[43] In his letter of 1703, Pitcairne adds that Cheyne has just written telling him that 'he has been in the country with John Craig and has brought some papers on that subject [i.e. calculus] to be printed, of which I shall shortly give yow an account'.

One of these papers was probably that entitled *Solutio Problematis: A Clariss. viro D. Jo. Bernoilli in Diario Gallico Feb. 1704, Provosti, Quam D. G. Cheyneao Communicavit Jo. Craig,* when it appeared in the Transactions (No. 289, January-February, 1704). It is unsurprising to find Craige dedicating his work to Cheyne for, in keeping with his enthusiasm to see the work of other Newtonians appear in print,

---

[39] Craige was in Cambridge with Newton in 1685, but after a period spent in Edinburgh with Pitcairne and Gregory, he lived in England, where from at least August 1697 to April 1708 he was minister at Gillingham, Dorset, and subsequently prebend at Potterne, near Salisbury, under the patronage of Cheyne's kinsman Bishop Burnet. (BL Sloane MSS 4036 f. 348 and 4041, f. 126). Craige also held a living at Durnford. Another Scottish mathematician, Colin Maclaurin, later told Colin Campbell that when he first visited London in 1719 and met Newton, he was 'very much caressed by Mr Craig who almost always lives with Bishop Burnet's sons who were my very good friends too. I saw him almost every day...I often wrote to Mr Burnet with whom he stays and sometimes to himself' (MacLaurin to Colin Campbell, 6 July, 1720 in The Collected Letters of Colin MacLaurin ed. by Stella Mills (Cheshire, 1982), p. 165). Cheyne's family connection with the Burnets suggests that he had earlier enjoyed the same hospitality, but the staunch Whig bias of the Burnet household contrasts strongly with Cheyne's obvious Tory connections. Party preferences of the ambitious Cheyne were perhaps overridden by familial allegiances and his desperate need for patronage.

[40] Johnston, Letters, pp. 38-9.

[41] Campbell, isolated in his Highland living, had asked Pitcairne to supply him with scientific books, Cheyne's in particular.

[42] Johnston, Letters, p. 38. EUL, Colin Campbell Archive (uncatalogued), Campbell to Pitcairne (draft, 1703?). One of Craige's letters to Campbell dated 30/1/1689 is printed in Newton, Corr III, pp. 8- 9. I have been unable to trace 9 others (1697-1708), listed in a nineteenth-century inventory of the Campbell papers, but one of these of 5 June, 1690 contained 'an assertion of the Lawfulness of Episcopalian Government, animo 1689'.

[43] The Campbell Archive (uncatalogued), two draft letters to Craige (and Cheyne) and Cheyne of 1706 and 1708.

Cheyne was instrumental in getting Craige's papers published. A letter of Cheyne's to Sir Hans Sloane, in his capacity as Secretary of the Royal Society, dated 28 May 1703, shows Cheyne attempting to meet Sloane to discuss the printing of Craige's work. After his own problems over the typography of his Methodus Inversa, Cheyne wanted to supervise the printing of Craige's paper and asked Sloane if it could appear in the next issue of the Transactions, as promised, adding 'and I hope you will allow no-one to see it till it is printed, except it be those you find it necessary to show it, if any such there be'.[44] The distraught tone of these letters to Sloane reveals the intensely critical, competitive atmosphere in which both Cheyne and Craige, and the other early Newtonians were working. This was soon to take its toll on Cheyne's health.

## Philosophical Principles, 1705

Craige also shared Cheyne's desire to apply Newtonian mathematical principles to fresh areas of intellectual enquiry and in particular he was interested in theology. Craige later remarked that Newton's main purpose in exposing 'the errors of Carte's philosophy, was because he thought it was made on purpose to be the foundation of infidelity' and that he had been 'much more solicitous in his inquirys into Religion than into Natural Philosophy'.[45] When Cheyne called for a *Principia Medicinae Theoreticae Mathematicae*, John Craige had already published his Theologiae Christianae Principia Mathematica (1699), a work dedicated to Bishop Burnet which tried to develop Pitcairne's mathematical methods of proof within an attempt to adopt the Newtonian calculus to theological issues. Craige presents an abstruse millenarian argument that the historical evidence for the truth of Christianity will 'decay' at such a rate that all faith will disappear by the year 3150, the date of the Second Coming.[46] The first five 'Definitions' and later chapters of Craige's work (II-VI), have been ignored by modern commentators. They are concerned with a 'Calculus of Pleasure', a crude attempt to apply the calculus to moral philosophy.[47] Craige's application of the

---

[44] BL MS 4039.f.135. A similar request to Sloane by Cheyne of 22 March or May? 1703, probably refers to the same project (BL MS 4039, f. 249).

[45] Cambridge University, Keynes MS 132 and R. Westfall, Never at Rest, p. 826-9. In the light of Cheyne's religious unorthodoxy, it is interesting that Craige adds that 'they showed that his thoughts were some times different from those which are commonly received, which would ingage him in disputes and this was a thing which he avoided as much as possible'. (quoted in Manuel, p. 12).

[46] Another edition appeared at Leipzig in 1755, reflecting Continental interest in Craige's work. Part of it is translated as *Craig's Rules of Historical Evidence 1699* in History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History 4 ('s Gravehage, 1964).

[47] Craige and Cheyne's awkward attempts to use Newtonian mathematical methods to solve problems in moral philosophy, were nevertheless early examples of a movement which culminates in Hume's

mathematics of infinites to the question of human desire directly anticipates Cheyne's related attempt to consider desire within a Newtonian metaphysical framework in Part II of the revised Philosophical Principles (1715). In fact, Craige himself advised Cheyne over the writing of the first edition of this work, but he subsequently contributed a corrective chapter on Cheyne's original 'mathematics of infinites' (1705, Ch. iv), for the enlarged edition of 1715 (Part II, Ch. iii). Clearly Craige encouraged Cheyne's increasingly unorthodox application of Newtonian 'principles' to questions of theology, metaphysics and epistemology.

It is outside the scope of the present thesis to consider the whole substance of Cheyne's Philosophical Principles (1705). It is a work of eclectic synthesis rather than great originality, although as Bowles and Guerrini illustrate, it contains some interesting details for specialist students concerned with the development of Newton's concept of short-range attraction and the aether; two specific areas where Cheyne appears to anticipate Newton in print.[48] Cheyne's Prefatorial aim 'that *Atheism*, may...be eternally confounded, by the most distant Approaches to the true Causes of Natural Appearances' was a common-place of the 'Christian Virtuosi' tradition propagated by Boyle. Consisting of four chapters, Cheyne's Principles encompass a full account of Newton's mathematical 'Laws of Nature', and employ arguments both from and to design to demonstrate the incontestable existence and benevolence of God as creator and sustainer of the world. Chapter I, 'Of the Physical Laws of Nature and Uniform Appearances of Nature', refutes earlier accounts, and gives a detailed explanation of Newton's 'laws of nature' as they appear in the Principia. Here Cheyne examines the laws of gravity and their consequences for the behaviour of bodies both terrestrial and celestial, and he discusses atomic theory, elasticity, cohesion, the properties of fluids and light, and the general laws of refraction and reflection as discussed in Newton's Optics.

In Chapter Two, 'Of the Origination of the World, and of Mankind in Particular', Cheyne addresses himself to the so-called 'world-maker controversy', sparked off by Thomas Burnet's Sacred Theory of the World (1684), and the ensuing debate concerning a *physica sacra*. Cheyne sets out to refute Epicurean and mechanistic

---

related project in the Treatise (1739). The Scottish mathematician Colin McLaurin who knew Craige, wrote a similar treatise *De Viribus Mentium Bonipetis* ('On the Good-Seeking Forces of Minds'), which he mentions in a letter to Colin Campbell in 1714.

[48] Cheyne sources are apparent in his Preface where he refers to 'Mr Newton's store and his Inventions'; for the physiological sections to Borelli, Bellini, and 'that friend to mankind, my constant good friend Dr Archibald Pitcairne'; and for the 'corrections and advices' of John Craige, 'the learned Dr Arbuthnot, Physician to her Royal Highness and Dr Friend of Christ Church, Oxford'. Within the body of the text he makes frequent allusions to the Royal Society's Transactions, its counterpart in Paris and the work of Halley, John and James Keill, Bernoulli, Whiston, etc.

theories of the origination of the world and he asserts that the conclusions about the earth's origins to be derived from Newtonian natural philosophy accord with the account of the creation and history of the globe as told by Moses in the Old Testament. Chapter Three, 'Of the Existence of a Deity' is a conventional refutation of atheism based upon arguments from design rooted in his earlier 'Newtonian' account of a mathematically ordered creation. This section lapses into an encyclopaedic 'physico-theology' which reveals his medical concerns by its distinctly physiological and anatomical bias. In the last chapter, 'Of the Nature of Finiteness and Infinitness and the Limits of Human Knowledge', Cheyne applies his mathematical interests to fundamental questions of ontology and epistemology. Even this section, like much of the work, is derivative, being essentially an unacknowledged repetition of John Keill's account of infinite divisibility in his Veram Physicam (1703).

Pitcairne awaited publication with enthusiasm, writing to Colin Campbell on 2 April, 1705, that 'Dr. Cheyns philosophical principles of natural religion are dylie expected'.[49] Unfortunately, Pitcairne's response to the work does not survive, but Cheyne certainly found a dedicated admirer in Campbell, who transcribed the entire work into a bound notebook alongside a similar transcript of the Principia![50] In England others were less enraptured. Gregory was quick to note that 'it is talked that Dr Cheyn has stoln a great deal of his book of religion from Dr Bentleys sermons preached at Mr Boyle's Lecture'.[51] Richard Bentley, notably missing from Cheyne's acknowledged sources, delivered the first of the famous Boyle Lectures in 1691.[52] Earlier Bentley had been attacked by Cheyne's adviser, Dr Freind. Craige may well have prompted Cheyne to publish his work in the form it takes, for he had been directly involved in the original Boyle Lectures, when Bentley, at Newton's suggestion, approached him in 1691, for help in understanding the religious implications of the 'New Science'.[53] William Wotton, Bentley's champion in the Phalaris Controversy, appended a 'Defense' to the 1705 version of his Reflections upon Ancient Learning...with Observations upon the Tale of a Tub (1705), wherein he concludes an attack upon John Keill who had ridiculed Bentley, by noting that:

> there is scarce one single Instance that Dr Bentley had urged before of the *Wisdom of God in Forming of the World, and of Human Bodies* in his *Six Last Discourses*, which *Mr Keill's* countryman, Dr *Cheyne*, has not urged in the same way, and drawn the same Conclusions from

---

[49] Johnston, Letters, p. 41.

[50] EUL, Campbell Archive. This was perhaps a mnemonic exercise rather than the result of being unable to procure his own copy.

[51] Hiscock Memoranda, p. 24.

[52] Published as The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism (1692).

[53] Westfall Never at Rest, pp. 504-6.

> them, that Dr Bentley had done so long before. Dr Cheyne's Authority will pass with Mr *Keill* because his Book was approved by Dr Fr nd of Christchurch and by two excellent Mathematicians, my very worthy Friends, Dr Arbuthnot and Mr Craig (p. 482)

Whether or not Cheyne deliberately slighted Bentley, his book was dragged into the vortex of the Phalaris Controversy.

When Cheyne was engaged upon correcting the proofs of his Philosophical Principles, Arbuthnot attempted to reconcile Gregory and his old college friend by inviting them both to his house. As Gregory later wrote 'there Dr Arbuthnot told that Dr Cheyn was very sensible of my friendship in acquainting him with his errors, and beg'd of me to show him more'.[54] Gregory showed Cheyne 'above twenty' serious errors and gave him a list of others. Cheyne 'was loath to acknowledge some' but 'talked of writing a recantation or Apology for some of them'.[55] Gregory was obviously contemptuous of Cheyne's second attempt to impress. In particular he objected to Cheyne's methodology which exploited analogies which both he and Newton held to be hypothetical rather than certain proofs.[56] Newton was particularly careful to keep science and theology separate in his published works. In Manuel's terminology (borrowed from Comenius), Newton was a 'separatist' whereas Cheyne, especially after 1705, is better described as a 'pansophist' who took the theological consequences of Newtonian methodology far beyond those prescribed by Newton himself.[57]

## Cheyne and Roxburghe

There is a further Scottish dimension to Cheyne's publication of the Philosophical Principles (1705), which emerges when we examine Cheyne's relationship with the book's dedicatee, the Earl of Roxburghe. It would be rash to assume any intimacy, or indeed in some instances, more than a distant acquaintance existed between an eighteenth-century author and their dedicatee, but in the case of Cheyne and his patron John Kerr, 4th Earl, and subsequently Duke of Roxburghe, there is evidence for this being more than a distant act of flattery. Cheyne states in his 1705 'Epistle

---

[54] Hiscock, Memoranda p. 24.

[55] Gregory noted disparagingly that he 'had a list of 429 errors in that book; and will undertake to shew more Errors in it than there are pages'. On 15 May, Gregory added that Cheyne had sent him a copy of the Errata containing all the errors he had pointed out, but, as Hiscock notes, this was not entirely accurate. Gregory's annotated presentation copy of Cheyne's book survives in Christ Church library. Most of the errors are accidentals or of punctuation. The important ones in the Errata (itself incorrect), are Gregory's, but despite his claim, not all were included.

[56] Hiscock, p. 19.

[57] Manuel, p. 7; 28-9. For Newton's mixed responses to the religious 'systems' of his adherents see Ibid., p. 35.

Dedicatory' that the publishing of the book 'was undertaken in Obedience to your Commands' and that it contains 'part of those Discourses I had with your Lordship, when you allow'd me the Honour to talk with you on Philosophical Subjects'. Cheyne's relations with Roxburghe have been the subject of some speculation, largely due to Viets' unsubstantiated claim that Cheyne 'may have acted about 1690 as a tutor to John Ker [sic]' (p. 439). A closer examination of their relationship in the years immediately preceding the publication of Cheyne's first substantial book, serves to place that work in a fresh historical context.

John Kerr succeeded to his father's title and estates in 1696, upon the untimely death of his eldest brother Robert.[58] Both John and his younger brother William attended Edinburgh Town College, the former in 1692-95 and the latter in 1694-98.[59] Numerous detailed receipts regarding the expenses of their College education survive but make no mention of Cheyne.[60] Cheyne first makes his appearance in three autograph receipts dated 2 July 1702, 23 April 1703, and 11 February 1703, with respect to the payment of fees for Cheyne teaching William Kerr mathematics at London. These were paid through Patrick Grey, the non-juring minister of Kelso and private chaplain to the Countess.[61] There is no evidence for Cheyne's employment by the Roxburghe family before 1702, and certainly not in the early 1690s, although he probably knew both John and William as young 'bottle companions' in Pitcairne's Edinburgh 'Club'.[62] It seems likely therefore that the sophisticated Philosophical

---

[58] John, William, and an elder brother Robert were the sons of Robert the IIIrd Earl of Roxburghe (1658-1682), by Lady Margaret Hay, eldest daughter of John Hay, the Marquis of Tweeddale. The Scottish Peerage VII, p. 350 and DNB.

[59] Edinburgh University Matriculations Rolls, I, pp. 106, 110, and 115.

[60] A Robert Cheyne, peri-wig maker, cut the boys hair ! John's tutor was one William Craig (perhaps a relation of John Craige). Some confusion may have arisen with Cheyne since Craig did in fact move to the Bath district by March 1706 (SRO, GD. 1100, 205. Box 33/3/10/27 and Wm. to Countess, 15/10/1705 in Bundle 1063).

[61] SRO, 1100, Bundle 1082. Cheyne received 15 gns for 5 months on 2 July 1702 (for February to July 1702) and also 8 shillings 'for two books viz. Clavins Euclid in English & Harris Algebra'); 12 gns. on 23 April 1703 (for 1 January to 31 April 1703); and 6 gns. on 25 December, 1703 (for 25 October to 25 December, 1703). William's interest in mathematics is confirmed by earlier receipts. In April 1699 he paid Pitcairne's friend James Gregory (later Professor of Mathematics at Edinburgh), 86 gns. for lessons in mathematics (Bundle 726).

[62] G. S. Rousseau paints a romantic picture of Cheyne hearing 'much millenarian talk at Roxburgh House, the great country estate where he lived in comfortable circumstances during those years' (ie. the 1690s). Moreover, he also claims that Cheyne 'joined a group of Scottish mystics in the 1690s centred around George Garden, the Quietist. Through them he obtained a post as tutor to the young Earl of Roxburgh' (*IDC*, pp. 86-7). These claims merely compact the speculations of Viets with further undocumented assumptions. Cheyne spent the latter part of this period as household tutor at Ingliston from where he was 'uncomfortably' expelled. The Roxburghe family home was Broxmouth, until the Duke built the Adam-designed mansion, Floors Castle in the 1720s. The evidence for Cheyne's crucial connections with Garden's 'Mystic' circle (see Chapter 3 below), certainly suggests that Cheyne knew members of Garden's circle before he left Scotland, but there is no evidence that he had any pronounced

Principles (1705), was based upon Cheyne's notes for informal and advanced discussions of natural philosophy with the Earl which took place intermittently between 1701, when Cheyne lost his post at Ingliston, and 1705, during which time Cheyne was employed teaching William more rudimentary mathematics. Cheyne may well have taught other private pupils mathematics during his first winters in London.

Although reputedly 'of great Learning and Virtue', and 'the best accomplish'd young man of quality in Europe', in 1700, in private John Kerr was a freethinking young rake plagued by venereal disease. He attended church 'for reputations sake' regretting that it kept him from hunting both deer and serving maids, and he was happy to quote the Psalms in bawdy and irreligious contexts.[63] His exchanges with Pitcairne show some academic interest in the theological implications of natural philosophy, but there is nothing to suggest the Roxburghe household was particularly pious.[64] Cheyne gained Roxburghe's patronage through Pitcairne, the family physician, and particular friend of the Countess. Both John and William Kerr (along with their neighbour Bennet) belonged to his 'enlightened' drinking 'Club'.[65] Pitcairne sent the Earl drafts of his poems and discussed a mutual passion for book collecting.[66] Indeed Pitcairne seems to have taken Roxburghe under his intellectual wing, later to flatter him in a Latin eulogy as a sort of Scottish Maecenas, dedicated to the revival

---

sympathies with their quietist doctrines prior to his breakdown in 1705-6. Indeed Cheyne himself describes his religious principles prior to this event as rationalist and somewhat lukewarm (EM, Part II, p. 238).

[63] J. Macky, Memoirs (1733), p. 191 and George Lockhart of Carnwath, Lockhart Papers 2 vols (1819), I, p. 95. Roxburghe to Robert Bennet, 1/10/1700. SRO, GD 205, Box 31, 1.

[64] The only time the brothers mention religion in their letters is either to complain of the low-breeding of Presbyterian ministers, or bemoan the expense and political complications of supporting their mother's Episcopalian chaplains: Johnston Letters p. 43; Wm. to Countess 31/1/1712 (SRO, GD 1100, Bundle 1063); 13/3/1711 (Bundle 1008); John to Countess 12/2/1708 (783) and 24/8/1712 (775). In response to Rousseau's claims (*IDC*, pp. 86-7), of 'millenarian talk' in the Roxburghe household, quietist doctrines are mentioned in a letter from Broxmouth, but only to be mocked as an aside in what is otherwise an explicitly bawdy letter to Capt. Bennet, (both Pitcairne and the young Earl's drinking companion): 'There is a book come out lately shewing a certain way of getting to heaven by faith, without death so there is a new colonie to be rigg'd out for the voyage. I desire to know if you will make one of the partie'. (Roxburghe to Bennet, Oct. 1700, SRO, GD. 205. Box 31, 1, 15). This alludes to George Garden's defense of a French visionary, An Apology for M. Antonia Bourignon (1699), and his establishment of a quietist 'colonie' in Banffshire with which Cheyne was later connected. I have found no evidence that Roxburghe took any serious interest in Cheyne's subsequent associations with Garden's quietist circle. Numerous bills for books show none of the very distinct mystical works being imported from the Continent by the Scottish Quietists. His letters contain none of the very characteristic vocabulary of pietism.

[65] See SRO GD 1100, Bundle 802, Pitcairne to Countess 22/12/1706 for evidence of Pitcairne as family physician. William Kerr was posted medical advice from Pitcairne whilst on a tour of the Continent in 1704. John was in frequent communication with Pitcairne over his health throughout 1704-6.

[66] Johnston, Letters, p. 40 and p. 67 and SRO GD 205, Box 34 f 4, letters 11, 13, 14 and 16 all reveal Pitcairne's friendship with Roxburghe.

of humanist learning.[67] On a more prosaic level, by 1703-4, Pitcairne was eager to exploit Roxburghe's increasing powers of patronage to further his plans to place his 'Newtonian' protégés, including Cheyne, in key posts within the Scottish academic establishment. Later it will be argued that the pursuit of these ambitions directly contributed to the breakdown which led Cheyne to embrace the radically different principles of enlightenment being propagated by quietist millenarians.

Cheyne's dedication of the Philosophical Principles to Roxburghe in 1705 may be viewed within the context of the Roxburghe's political involvements at this time. In 1704, the Earl, alongside Seafield, was made Secretary of State for Scotland, but Roxburghe had not always been in such favour at court. His activities in the Scottish Parliament, from 1702 to its demise in 1707, when his vote for the Union was rewarded with a Dukedom, suggests that like many of the participants in the Union debate, he was motivated by personal ambition rather than any purely patriotic or idealistic principles. But in 1703 he was prominent amongst the 'malcontents' (many of them in their minorities, like his political allies the Earls of Rothes and Haddington) who, after Tweeddale's dismissal, led the opposition or 'Country Party'.[68] In the debates of 1703 Roxburghe spoke as a staunch patriot demanding free-trade and independent powers in the Scottish Parliament to control the succession to the English throne. In this capacity he proposed the Limitations Bill drawn up by the Country Party's idealistic theoretician, Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun.

In February 1704, Roxburghe accompanied his neighbours, Rothes and Baillie of Jerviswood, in a delegation to London, where they asked the Queen to re-call a Scottish Parliament and allow a local enquiry into the Scotch Plot.[69] Cheyne was almost certainly in Roxburghe's company on this occasion and it may have marked the beginnings of the physician's long-standing intimacy with Baillie.[70] It is generally believed that Anne, charmed by these young Scots peers, promised Roxburghe the post of Secretary of State if he co-operated in Seafield's plans to create a 'New Party', a court-country alliance designed to oust Queensberry. Consequently, in 1704, Roxburghe adopted an equivocal position in the New Party (later dubbed 'the Squadrone Volante'), failing to renounce his old patriotic views but supporting a Hanoverian succession upon the inclusion of stringent limitations. Roxburghe's

---

[67] *Joanni Duci Roxburgio* in Pitcairne, Selecta Poemata (Edinburgh, 1737), pp. 39-40.

[68] Tweeddale had acted as a guardian to Roxburghe's interests, when a minor, against the Douglas of Clavers clan with whom the Roxburghs were traditional rivals. The Douglases adhered to Queensberry, leader of the Court Party (P. W. Riley, The Union of England and Scotland: a Study in Anglo- Scottish Politics of the Eighteenth-Century (Manchester, 1978), p. 18).

[69] Mackenzie pp. 208-13.

[70] See below Chapter 8.

apparent desertion of his patriotic principles enraged Saltoun. After a sitting of the Parliament in July 1705, a duel between Roxburghe and Saltoun over 'mistakes' in the House was only just stopped 'in the field'.[71] The immediate cause of this argument was Roxburghe's defence of John Law of Lauriston's economic proposals. Law, who subsequently devised the 'Mississippi Scheme', and handled the Pretender's finances at Paris, probably first met Cheyne in these early years through the Squadrone, for he also later became one of Cheyne's model patients.[72]

Before the disagreement in 1705, Fletcher published a pamphlet early in 1704 which gives a valuable insight into the debate surrounding Roxburghe's entry onto the stage of Scottish politics. Entitled descriptively An Account of a Conversation Concerning the Right Regulation of Governments for the Common Good of Mankind in a Letter to the Marquis of Montrose, the Earls of Rothes, Roxburghe and Haddington. (Edinburgh, 1704), this takes the form of a platonic dialogue between Saltoun and three courtiers, Sir Edward Seymour, Sir Christopher Musgrave and the Earl of Cromarty, who all blame Saltoun's Country faction for creating unnecessary delays in the drawing up of a Union agreement. Seymour addresses Fletcher sarcastically as the man who has drawn attention to himself 'by framing Utopias and new models of Government, under the name of limitations' in which he is supported 'by several men of quality, of about two or three and twenty years of age, whose long experience and consummate prudence in public affairs could not but produce wonderful schemes of government'.[73] Saltoun responds by suggesting that Parliament is a far less corrupt place for young gentlemen than a court and dismisses the intellectual pursuits of the young gentlemen who support him as the understandable but unfortunate resort of those denied real political power:

> To say that young men cannot understand the nature of government, and such regulations as are most conducing to the happiness of mankind, when at the same time they are thought capable of mathematics, natural philosophy, and the art of reasoning, and metaphysical speculations, which contain things more difficult to conceive than any in the art of government, seems absurd. But by the present manner of education the minds of young men are for many years debauched from all the duty and business to which they are born; and in the place of moral and civil knowledge and virtue, addict themselves to mathematical, natural, and metaphysical speculations, from which they are never able to withdraw their thoughts. (Saltoun, Works p. 271).

---

[71] Baillie, as the Earl's second, pleaded that his friend's bad leg put him at an unfair disadvantage, thus delaying matters in time for the arrival of a detachment of guards sent by the Commissioner. Seafield to Godolphin, 14 July, 1705, printed in Seafield Letters (Publications of the Scottish History Society) 2nd Series, XI (1915), p. 58 and Mackenzie, pp. 208-13.

[72] In October 1722 Cheyne entertained Law and his son at Bath (HMC Portland MSS, VII, p. 335). Cheyne later noted Law's temperate habits in NM, p. 82.

[73] The Political Works of Andrew Fletcher Esq. of Saltoun (Glasgow, 1749), p. 269.

Saltoun's unease that such studies provided an inappropriate education for a patriotic young statesmen was confirmed within a year by what he perceived to be Roxburghe's betrayal.

These themes are taken up by Cheyne in his 'dedicatory letter' to Roxburghe, in the Philosophical Principles (1705), where he flatteringly refers to his patron's 'uncommon Advances, even in the more abstruse parts of Geometry, and Natural Knowledge' but emphasises the fact that this scholarly precocity has not hindered the Earl from making 'deep Inquiries in the Knowledge of Civil Government'. 'Universal Learning' has not left him unfit to lead a useful and active public life. Cheyne compares Roxburghe's broad, balanced, liberal education with that advanced by 'the Ancients' who sought to establish the foundations of learning necessary for both 'Knowledge and for Business'. This makes it possible for a young gentleman to decide later in life if he wishes to enter public life or serve mankind through learning and scholarship. 'The Queen's Choice', in making Roxburghe Principal Secretary of State for Scotland, is proof enough, suggests Cheyne, of the Earl's abilities as a statesman, particularly in view of the present political climate: 'Her Majesty having put You in the most difficult Post of the Government of your Country, I would say too, in the most difficult Times, if any thing could be rekon'd so, for the present Reign' (p. ii). Cheyne offers a deliberate defence of the Earl's suitability for public office in the light of earlier court criticisms and Saltoun's recent disapproval of his acceptance of court favours. We detect Pitcairne's influence behind Cheyne's defence of a Classical, liberal education for young noblemen. His idealistic portrait of Roxburghe, exemplifying the qualities of the gentleman combined with those of the scholar, suggests Shaftesbury's nostalgic vision of the statesman as philosopher and noble youth.[74]

Cheyne's early career as a tutor left him with decided views on education which were to inform his mature thoughts on the morality and practicalities of maintaining physical and mental health, especially amongst scholars. We glimpse him discussing theories of education privately with a friend, Andrew Cunningham , at Bath in 1709. Their conversation was prompted by a request for approval of his chosen educational methods from their mutual friend Andrew Ramsay, who, with Cheyne's encouragement, had just taken up the post of household tutor to the children of another Scottish peer, Lord Wemyss.[75] Cunningham and Cheyne agree that public

---

[74] For a pertinent discussion of the revival of this tradition in early eighteenth-century Edinburgh see Peter Jones, *The Scottish Professoriate and the Polite Academy* in Wealth and Virtue ed. by Istan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 96-97.

[75] For Cheyne's friendship with Cunningham and his part in getting Ramsay this post see below Chapters 4 and 5.

schools are pernicious, inculcating 'bad habits' and regrettably persistent friendships, 'with no Foundation but a certain sympathy of childish humours or...Inclination to the same Diversion'. It is often argued that at public schools, boys 'acquire a certain Freedom and Briskness in Conversation that is very necessary for a young man...of Quality, but Dr C[heyne] very well observes that a man who has laid up a good Stock of Knowledge as a Fund of Conversation is never at a loss in any company and some degree of bashfulness in a young Man is very agreable and recommends him even in the eye of the world more than any thing'.[76] Cheyne's defence of private over public education and his Shaftesburian emphasis upon politeness is in keeping with his stance in the 1705 'Dedication'. We shall be seeing that by the 1730s, under the additional influence of sentimental, quietist religious doctrines and in opposition to Walpolean corruption, Cheyne reformulated this concept of learned nobility into a millennialist and deterministic doctrine of pious, nervous sensibility, which served to distinguish the 'Genius or Man of Fine Natural Parts', the 'True Philosopher', and the 'true and zealous Patriots' from the dull, unenlightened orders of mankind.[77]

In 1709 Ramsay had asked Cunningham and Cheyne to recommend works on the theory of 'Christian Education', but they were regrettably pressed to come up with suggestions. Cunningham admits his ignorance of the subject, but passed on Cheyne's recommendations: 'Mr P's is very short and general but however may serve as a plan...The A. Bp. of Cambray *Education*, has some very good things in it and as to the Bodily part Mr Lock gives some very good hints and Directions'. The first of these probably refers to Pierre Poiret's True Principles of the Christian Education of Children (Edinburgh, 1695), the work of a Franco-Flemish pietist with whose work Cheyne was soon to be deeply engaged (see Chapter 3). Certainly the second choice, Fénélon's popular Instructions for the Education of Daughters (Paris, 1687, translated, 1707), reflects this Continental influence. The citing of Locke's Thoughts Concerning Education, first published in 1693, and already in its sixth edition by 1709, is particularly interesting. Cheyne read both this and Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), during the 1690s, when he was a tutor. Locke's Education, (concerning the practical application of Locke's empiricist philosophy), is a sophisticated defence of the type of private, classical, liberal education Cheyne himself encouraged, written by a man who, like Cheyne, could combine the roles of scientifically-orientated tutor and physician.[78] The influence of Locke's Stoical

---

[76] NLS, Acc. 4796, Box 104, f. 26b. Cunningham and Cheyne to Ramsay, 18 June, 1709.

[77] ER, Part II, Discourse V, pp. 210-12 and Chapter 9 below.

[78] For Locke's views on 'Liberal Education' see the discussion by J. T. Axell in his The Educational Writings of John Locke (Cambridge, 1968), p. 58 and pp. 81-2. For the influence of Locke's medical

doctrines for the management of the body may be felt in Cheyne's later writings on health. As 'the very few that have Mathematicks enough to understand his [Newton's] Demonstration', Cheyne must have found inspiration in Locke's early approval of Newton's 'mathematical principles' as part of a young nobleman's education.[79] From its opening paragraphs, which attempt to define 'the distinct *Ideas*' needed to comprehend something of '*Nature* and its *Laws*', the Philosophical Principles, often betray Cheyne's familiarity with Locke's epistemology. But in his account of revealed religion, added in 1715, Cheyne criticised Locke's failure to comprehend man's spiritual nature and perfectibility, which has lead his followers into debasing 'Christianity and its *Holy Mysteries, Faith, Grace, divine Revelation* and *Inspiration* and the Means of man's Recovery...*into meer heathenish Morals*, or *Human Philosophy*' (Part II, p. 115). Nevertheless, in 1705, Cheyne thought that his Principles were sufficient as they stood to challenge 'our modern *atheists*' who 'have taken *Sanctuary* within the Bounds of *Natural Philosophy* (p. 179). Roxburghe's intellectual friendship with Pitcairne must have led to talk of scepticism, which a more cautious and perhaps more pious Cheyne sought to disprove. But the publication of this work, clearly modelled upon the popular Anglican Boyle Lectures, was not only a piece of propaganda for the religious orthodoxy of its careerist patron. It was also designed to serve the intellectual ambitions of its author who was keen to advance his own career as a Newtonian theorist.

In fact, by 1704-5, Cheyne and Pitcairne were deeply involved in academic schemes they hoped to further through Roxburghe's patronage. On 30 November, 1704, David Gregory recorded suspiciously in his notebook:

> this day being St. Andrew's day was first told me the intrigue betwixt Lord Roxburgh, Dr Pitcairn, Dr Cheyn etc. of reforming Colleges in Scotland and of the Plan printed by Dr Pitcairn at Edinburgh. mighty things were said of the constant Correspondence betwixt my Ld. Roxburgh and Dr Pitcairn, and the constant dining of Dr Cheyn with my Lord or my Lord with him, and my Lord's pressing Dr Cheyn to return to his country etc. [80]

It seems to be no coincidence that Gregory heard of these activities on the very day on which Pitcairne was reinstated as a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians at

---

background see p. 62. The introductory chapter on 'Locke and Scientific Education' is particularly relevant.

[79] Significantly in the Education, Locke discusses the Principia whilst arguing that 'the Systems of Physicks, that I have met with' give him little encouragement of finding any certainty in scientific systems: 'if others could give us so good and clear an account of the other parts of nature, as he [Newton] has of this our Planetary World... we might in time hope to be furnished with more true and certain Knowledge in several Parts of this stupendous Machine, than hitherto we could have expected' (p. 306).

[80] Hiscock, p. 21. Roger Emerson has recently commented on this project in *Science and...the Concerns of the Scottish Enlightenment*, History of Science, XXVI, (1988), p. 342.

Edinburgh and indeed Gregory confirms a connection a month later: '5 Janrii, 1705. Dr Cheyne braggs that next summer he is to goe to Scotland, and together with Dr Pitcairne settle all the Practice of Physick, and publish unalterable Principles thereof. he talks to Dr Mead the same but makes York the place of meeting'.[81] The precise details of Pitcairne's renewed plans to control the Edinburgh medical establishment, and the precise involvement of Cheyne in their formulation and promotion is difficult to ascertain. Cheyne was probably hoping for an academic post at Edinburgh, hence Roxburghe's 'pressing' him to return north. Perhaps Pitcairne tried to get Cheyne put forward as a candidate for the new Chair of Anatomy at Edinburgh which happened to go the next year to the surgeon Robert Elliot.[82] Certainly Pitcairne used Roxburghe's influence to further his aim of planting political and intellectual allies in posts throughout the Scottish colleges.[83] When seen within the context of these Scottish manoeuvres, Cheyne's Philosophical Principles, with their distinctively anatomical physico-theological contents, reads like a blatant advertisement for their author's suitability as a theologically orthodox Newtonian suitable for a university post.[84]

---

[81] Hiscock, p. 23. As noted earlier, Pitcairne, Mead and Cheyne were exchanging medical information in 1703, but the allusion to York remains obscure.

[82] Pitcairne had been ambitious to develop the teaching of anatomy at Edinburgh ever since his return from Leyden where he had been impressed by the Dutch use of dissection. In 1694, Pitcairne promoted the surgeon Alexander Monteith as his representative in a successful scheme to establish a dissecting theatre in the city. Pitcairne himself delivered the last of an annual ten day course of lectures accompanying a dissection (J. Struthers Historical Sketch of the Edinburgh Medical School (1867), pp. 7-14). After his arguments with the R.C.P.E. in 1696, his attentions turned to the rival College of Surgeons. Elliot's appointment in 1706 was the result of him petitioning the Incorporation of Surgeons because 'a person in this City' planned to teach apprentices gratis in return for a share of the cadavers supplied by the Incorporation. Could this unnamed person have been Pitcairne ? His relations with the Surgeons following the schism in the R.C.P. remain unresearched. See the satirical verses 'Doctor Pitcairn's fareweel to the Surgeon's Hall' dated 11 August, 1711 (EUL, MS Laing II, 358-5).

[83] There is ample evidence of these endeavours in Pitcairne's surviving correspondence and indeed in October 1704 he was boasting to Roxburghe that 'My Lord, I know the King of Syracuse can by himself make professors etc., but I shall by my next make it demonstration' (Letters, p. 40). By May of 1705 Pitcairne was also approaching Mar, as Principle Secretary of State, to gain his support for Cheyne's 'master', Thomas Bower, who was promoted to the Chair of Mathematics at Kings, Aberdeen, later that year. Pitcairne also gained the patent for Charles Gregory at St Andrews in 1707, but both the appointment of Bower and Gregory caused political unease at the respective Universities (Ibid., pp. 42-45 and 52-56).

[84] Although he never gained such a post, Cheyne later described the book as 'Lectures on Natural Philosophy, and of its Consequences on Religion' (EH, p. vii). An impecunious Cheyne may have given public lectures between 1702 and 1705, perhaps for the virtuosi in one of the capital's coffee-houses, the 'penny-universities' (see, G. S. Rousseau 'Science Books and their Readers' in Books and their Readers in the Eighteenth-Century ed. by Isabel Rivers (Leicester, 1986), p. 209). In his PP, (1705) (p. 95), Cheyne describes a dramatic optical experiment 'which was by my order, repeated here at LONDON'. This was perhaps performed at such a lecture, or at The Royal Society. The experiment was one originally made by Bernoulli (published in the 'Memoire of the Academie Royal' 1700), It involved sealing mercury in a narrow 30 inch long tube of glass, which when vibrated in a darkened room

Gregory's allusion to Cheyne's involvement in publishing 'unalterable' medical principles clearly refers to a project relating to his call for a *Principia Medicinae*. Pitcairne told Gregory, in January, 1706, that he was much 'taken up in making a dissertation about diseases which shall contain all I can, of my owne, say about their cure in a few words'.[85] This was probably part of a long-term project to revise his Leyden Dissertations, to which Cheyne lent his mathematical skills.[86] As to Pitcairne's printing of a 'Plan' of his reforms at Edinburgh; this poses complex problems of identification which cannot be discussed here. There is certainly ample evidence that Roxburghe, his brother and the Countess were in constant communication with Pitcairne and Cheyne during 1703-6.[87] In confirmation of Gregory's suspicious tone, their letters reveal much intrigue afoot. There is evidence that Pitcairne fell into disfavour with Roxburghe when he revealed his turncoat position by inadvertently making it public that the Earl was feigning illness to avoid voting in Parliament.[88] Cheyne's precise role in this is obscure, although it seems likely that as the Earl's physician he was privy to the secret. The episode typifies the atmosphere of political and domestic intrigue which surrounded Cheyne's pre-Union hopes for Roxburghe's continued patronage. The collapse of Cheyne's health in 1705-6 may have been either a cause or an effect of his failure to return to Edinburgh and implement these 'Newtonian' reforms. We do not know if Pitcairne's loose tongue ultimately jeopardised the schemes afoot in Scotland.

Other such schemes suffered once the Union drew many of the Scottish peerage, including Roxburghe, down to the English court. The southern migration of Scottish nobility after 1707, boosted Cheyne's medical practice at London and Bath, where he

---

emitted flashes of light. Cheyne uses this as evidence that objects like the Sun and the fixed stars, which constantly emit light, slowly loose this power as their store of light is diminished. Cheyne later talked contemptuously of 'vulgar experiments', and was far more attracted to the mathematical approach of the Principia, than the experimental method of the Opticks. There is no evidence of him ever devising his own experiments.

[85] Johnston, Letters, p. 42.

[86] This new edition appeared posthumously in 1713. Cheyne's part in the revisions, itself an important indication that he continued to work with Pitcairne after his breakdown in 1705-6, is recorded by a contemporary hand on the flyleaf of the copy of A Letter from Sir R[ober]t Sibbald to Dr Archibald Pitcairn (Edinburgh, 1709), in the library of the Edinburgh R.C.P.E. This states that Bower penned A Letter from Dr James Walkinshaw to Sir Robert Sibbald (1709), on Pitcairne's behalf and apparently with Cheyne's help since 'Dr. Pitcairn lay'd the mistakes in calculation at Dr Cheyne's door who had undertook to do them & revise his dissertations for the press'. I am grateful to Deborah Brunton for drawing my attention to this note.

[87] Writing from Bath on 20 October, 1705, the Earl remarks that 'I was glad to know Pitcairne had been at Broxmouth, for his company I think adds to his prescriptions (SRO, GD IIOO, Bundle 750). Cheyne was with the Roxburghes at Bath in 1705 (Bundle 1066); Roxburghe to Countess, 3 and 13 May 1705 (Bundle 775).

[88] This fragmentary, opaque evidence in various Roxburghe letters would require unnecessarily unwieldy citation.

continued to serve many of his Scottish patrons including, Baillie, Gordon (Earl of Aderdeen), and 'Secretary Johnston', the Squadrone's older idealogue.[89] Cheyne continued to enjoy Roxburghe's patronage.[90] After Roxburghe's death in 1740, writing to the Earl of Aberdeen, Cheyne remarked that 'now my valuable friend and patron the worthy Duke of Roxburgh is gone, there is not a family in the island I shall put (of the same rank) in my esteem on a level with your Lordship'.[91]

Meanwhile, a physically and financially exhausted Pitcairne continued to fight his pamphlet battles but ended up a somewhat sorry figure who felt abandoned by his protégés. In December 1708, after the signing of the Union, he wrote to Bennet 'I hear all the good physicians are going to London but I'll stay here with the rest of nest-eggs and walliedraggle'.[92]

---

[89] For Aberdeen see SRO, GD 33/63/8 and for Baillie, Chapter 8 below.

[90] In January 1711, Roxburghe tells his mother 'I had the receipt by Gray and will show it to Dr Cheyne'. Writing to his mother in 1713, Roxburghe reported the death of her friend and Cheyne's patient, Mrs Johnston, wife of 'Secretary Johnston'. Roxburghe had just heard the news from Cheyne's own lips in London, who urged the Countess to return to Bath to continue her treatment of the previous season. Roxburghe's wife Mary consulted Cheyne in later years over the health of her husband, herself and their son. As late as December 1740 William Ker was reassuring his long-lived mother that what proved to be his brother's fatal illness, 'must certainly make him loose flesh, but I am glade Doctor Cheyny is not apprehensive'. (SRO, II00, Roxburghe to Countess Jan., 1711, (Bundle 749), Mary and Roxburghe to same, Spring 1712 (Bundle 768) and Wm. to Countess 20 Dec. 1740 (Bundle 1068).

[91] SRO, GD 33/63/8. Charles Oliphant writing to Dr Erskine in Moscow on December 19, 1709 described the economic effects of the Union upon Scottish physicians: 'The practice of Physick at Edinburgh begun to be very uneasy and laborious especially when I found as a consequence of the Union that most of our Quality or these of estates would either live at London or at their Country seats, which made me come here where I have been more than a year, I do believe I shall succeed here as well as expected, tho' the gaining a footing at first be the greatest difficulty' (RS, Fond 120/1/12). Similar pressures discouraged Cheyne from returning north, as he sometimes wished.

[92] SRO, GD 205/34/4/14. Concise Scots Dictionary (Aberdeen, 1985), p. 768, defines 'Wallydraggle' as 'the smallest, weakest, or youngest bird in the nest'. A 'nest-egg' is a 'dummy' egg deliberately planted in a nest to encourage laying.

# 3

# CRISIS AND REAWAKENING: 1704-1711

## Introduction: The First Crisis

Accounts of Cheyne's career all draw attention to the distinctly 'mystical' colouring to the enlarged second edition of the Philosophical Principles, which appeared in 1715 under the altered title, Philosophical Principles of Religion; Natural and Reveal'd.[1] They frequently note that this reflects Cheyne's religious reorientation after a spiritual crisis in 1705-6, during what Bowles describes as 'the period of Cheyne's withdrawal'.[2] Cheyne vividly recollected the circumstance surrounding this crucial first breakdown of his health in his autobiographical essay, the *Case of the Author*, printed at the close of The English Malady (1733).[3] Pitcairne's habit of running his medical practice from a tavern, had set Cheyne a model of how to combine the life of physician and fashionable 'wit'.[4] But this indulgence soon took its toll on a delicate constitution:

> Upon my coming to *London*, I all of a sudden changed my whole Manner of Living; I found the *Bottle-Companions* and the *younger Gentry*, and the *Free Livers*, to be the most easy of *Access*, and the most quickly susceptible of *Friendship and Acquaintance*, nothing being necessary for that purpose, but to be able to *Eat* lustily, and swallow down much *Liquor*; and being naturally of a large *size*, a cheerful Temper, and tolerably lively *Imagination*, and having, in my Country Retirement, laid in Store of *Ideas* and *Facts*, by these Qualifications I soon became caressed by them, and grew daily in *Bulk*, and in Friendship with these gay Gentlemen and their Acquaintances: I was tempted to continue this Course, no doubt, by a *Likeing* as well as to force a *Trade*, which Method I had observ'd to succeed with some others; and thus constantly Dineing and Supping in *Taverns*, and in the Houses of my Acquaintances of *Taste* and *Delicacy*, my Health was in a few Years brought into Distress by so sudden and

---

[1] Hélène Metzger, Attraction Universelle et Religion Naturelle en Quelques Commentatuers Anglais a Newton (Paris, 1938); G. Bowles, *The Place of Newtonian Explanation in English Popular Thought* (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Oxford, 1977). The latter argues that Cheyne's development of a Newtonian theodicy was unique in its full commitment to Neo-Platonic analogies (p. 106, pp. 124-138 and 287). M. Jacob, Newtonians and the English Revolution: 1688-1720 (Ithaca, 1976), and John Redwood, Reason, Ridicule and Religion (1976), provide useful contexts but do not mention Cheyne.

[2] G. Bowles, 'Physical, Human, and Divine Attraction in the Life and Thought of George Cheyne', Annals of Science, vol 30 (November, 1974), pp. 477-78 (hereafter '*Attraction*'). Bowles relates Cheyne's breakdown to his formulation of a theory of 'spiritual attraction' to explain the conflict of the human soul caught between contradictory divine and worldly forces (pp. 479- 81 and 483-84).

[3] The *Case of the Author* gives only a circumstantial account, with few dates to act as guides for constructing a detailed chronology. Rousseau is the first to do justice to Cheyne's *Case* as a guide to the deeper patterns of his career. Whilst I fully endorse Rousseau's remarks on the validity of using it, my interpretations differ from his (*IDC*, p. 81, f.1).

[4] Chalmers, p. 237; *Ad Greppam* in Pitcairne's Selecta Poemata (1737) p. 16.

violent a Change. I grew excessively *Fat*, short-breath'd, Lethargic and Listless (EM, pp. 325-26).

This physical and mental collapse was merely the culmination of a protracted period of ambitious social climbing, which had taken Cheyne from the obscurity of the Ingliston household into the glare of controversy amongst the 'scientific wits' of London.

Cheyne's life as a *bon-vivant* first came under threat in the autumn of 1704(?), when he suffered an intermittent fever which he was able to subdue with quinine.[5] He was left 'tolerably well, tho' as it were *jumbled* and *turbid*, and neither so *clear* in my Faculties, nor so *gay* in my Temper' (EM, p. 327). But in the following autumn (1705), he was seized by what he later described as a 'Vertiginous Paroxysm so extremely frightful and terrible, as to approach near to a fit of an *Apoplexy*, and I was forced in it to lay hold on the Posts of the Bed, for fear of tumbling out'. This vertigo continued especially when he lay on one particular side: 'But by degrees it turned to a constant violent *Head-ach, Giddiness, Lowness, Anxiety, and Terror*, so that I went about like a *Malefactor* condemn'd or one Who expected every Moment to be crushed by a *ponderous* Instrument of Death, hanging over his Head' (Ibid., p. 327). The imagery of criminality and execution betrays the morbid sense of guilt which accompanied these traumatic experiences of physical and mental disorientation.

Cheyne had to 'retire into the country quite alone', where he hoped the clean air, 'a low diet', and the drinking of mineral waters would aid his recovery.[6] He had a seton placed in his neck for several months and after taking a whole dispensary of 'vomits, purges, bitters and foetids' and, seeking the advice of many physicians, he found himself no better. He became very ill from taking Prince's Powder, overdosed on Laudanum, and put himself in a 'petit-flux de bouche' by taking Calomel (a mercurial preparation). Moreover all these tortuous cures had to be endured in isolation. He was forsaken by his '*Holiday Friends*' with his 'Body....melting away like a *Snow-Ball* in Summer, being dejected, *melancholy*, and much confin'd at home'. All his former '*bouncing*, protesting, undertaking Companions' forsook him and 'dropp'd off like Autumnal leaves: they should not bear it seems to see their Companion in such Misery and Distress, but retired to comfort themselves with a *cheer-upping* Cup,

---

5 Dates often tentatively derived from *Case of the Author*, which I assume was written around 1731-2, as it was in print by December, 1732. Dates in brackets may be one year too early. The only other evidence for dating his initial breakdown comes from Gregory's memoranda for 24 November, 1704, where (a few weeks before his entry on Cheyne's frequent attendance at Roxburghe's dinner-table), he notes that Cheyne has been denigrating Bernoulli, adding 'he has lately been very ill, and is low in his circumstances' (Hiscock, p. 20).

6 Where he went remains a mystery, but it was perhaps, despite his claims to being alone, at Gillingham in Dorset with Craige.

leaving me to pass the melancholy Moments with my own *Apprehensions* and *Remorse*' (EM, p. 328). The 'silly circumstance' of being abandoned by those whom he had helped, both financially and professionally, exacerbated his melancholia. He had to abandon his ambitious plans for gaining a public appointment in his native Scotland and began to feel the loneliness of exile.[7] In his account, Cheyne turns what was clearly a painfully disillusioning experience of betrayal into the basis for a homily upon the dangers of friendships which are 'not founded on *Solid Virtue* and in Conformity to the *Divine Order* but in *Sensual Pleasures*, and mere *Jollity*' (EM, p. 328-330). Illness and consequent introspection, for one who was obviously a natural extrovert, promoted a major spiritual crisis.

Cheyne described the resulting religious reawakening as a revival of an earlier, more pious personality that re-emerged after being temporarily overshadowed by that of a voluptuary. He was anxious to reassure his readers that throughout his '*Wanderings and Follies*' into creaturely indulgence, he never '*pimp'd* to the *Vices* or *Infidelity*'. Aware that he was near to death, 'infallibly entering into an *Unknown* state of things', Cheyne drew strength from the thought that he had never wholly abandoned the basic precepts of his Christian education: the belief in 'the *Existence* of a *Supreme* and *infinitely* perfect Being, the *Freedom* of the Will, the *Immortality* of the Spirits of all *Intelligent* beings and the Certainty of *future* Rewards or *Punishments*' (EM, p. 330). But these are no more and no less than Herbert of Cherbury's tenets of natural religion which, when adopted by freethinking deists (like Pitcairne?), meant the rationalisation of faith at the expense of a supposedly superstitious revelation. Cheyne cites the first edition of his Philosophical Principles (1705), as proof of the extent to which he had continued to uphold these basic doctrines of natural religion.

In *extremis*, Cheyne found that the rational proofs he had offered in 1705, were psychologically inadequate: '*these* alone were not sufficient to *quiet* my Mind at that Juncture' (EM, p. 331). They failed to account for what he began to feel must be God's particular intervention in his personal destiny. Afraid that the 'Love of *Sensuality*' might have 'impair'd my Spiritual Nature', he felt he was being put on trial for his former waywardness. His preservation from the brink of death or insanity was surely an act of Divine intervention aimed at saving him for a specific task in God's providential plan. In his heart he became convinced that God was truly immanent and

---

[7] Cheyne always kept a strong sense of his Scottish identity. Whilst recovering at Bath in 1709, he was offended at being shunned by some of his old friends from Scotland, like a certain Bainbrigg, one of the jovial companions of the past who stayed 'with a Club of his own Friends, they live like English people' (NLS, Fettercairn MSS, Acc., 4796, 26b). There is ample evidence of Cheyne keeping his strong Aberdeenshire brogue.

actively striving, through the grace of Jesus Christ, to bring about the restoration of his wayward creatures.

Although in retrospect Cheyne denied ever courting with 'infidelity', it seems likely that he experienced moments of doubt and despair during his breakdown which exposed the weaknesses and shortcomings of his earlier rationalist defence of Christianity, which said nothing of personal faith or revelation. In later years, when discussing 'nervous' illness, Cheyne talked of the need to avoid dwelling on 'the dark Side of Things, that leads to Pyrronism, fatalism, infidelity and despair' (ER, p. v.). This sliding scale of negative psychological conditions probably describes his own earlier experiences of religious doubt, and his professional contact with 'nervous' patients. Certainly in 1705-6, the proximity of personal dissolution aroused both his conscience and his curiosity as he wondered if there were not 'more clear Accounts discoverable of that *State* I was then (I thought) apparently going into, than can be obtained from the mere Light of *Nature* and *Philosophy'*. He was compelled to consider that there might be 'higher more noble, and more enlightening *Principles* revealed to Mankind somewhere, and if there were not more encouraging and enlivening *Motives* proposed to form a more extensive and *Heroic* Virtue' (EM, p. 331). Cheyne's story belongs to a long tradition of conventional Christian conversion or repentance narratives, but what is particularly interesting about his 're-awakening' and its crucial consequences for his subsequent career, is precisely where he found those 'more enlightening *Principles*' and the form they took.

Cheyne began to live under an ever-present sense of his relationship with God and eternity. He never found any 'sensible *Tranquillity* or *Ammendment*' (EM, pp. 333-4), until he began to abide by the following personal pietist rule: 'To neglect nothing to secure my eternal peace, more than if I had been certified I should die within a day: nor to mind any thing that my secular obligations and duties demanded of me, less than if I had been ensured to live fifty years more' (EM, p. 334). By insisting upon a balance between our spiritual and secular duties in a constant confrontation with mortality, this tells us much of the painful personal experience which lay behind Cheyne's mature brand of philosophical pietism. But it is open to interpretation at precisely what stage he came to see his illness as a personal providential act of God, designed to draw his wayward soul back to its divine origins.[8] Certainly between 1705 and 1711, through successive bouts of recovery and relapse, Cheyne underwent a fitful and self-tortured period of

---

[8] I cannot support Rousseau's very precise dating of these events in *IDC*, pp. 92-5. When Cheyne talks of the Philosophical Principles (1705), as representative of his former position, he describes it as 'published some Years before that happened' (EM, p. 331). This clearly indicates that the religious re-awakening he is describing in this passage did not happen in 1706. This is supported by Cheyne's account of a near 'miraculous' recovery in 1710-11, (discussed in Chapter 5).

spiritual reappraisal. All the evidence points to this being a gradual process of 'restoration' with intermittent 'desertions of the spirit' of the kind described by the mystics he subsequently studied. It was not a sudden Pauline 'conversion' of the type familiar to us from the puritan tradition (and later described by Cheyne's Methodist associates).[9]

With what he thought to be the approach of death, he considered which of his associates was an exemplary Christian whom he would most wish to emulate. He turned to, 'a worthy and learned *Clergyman* of the *Church of England*, sufficiently known and distinguished in the *Philosophical* and *Theological* World (whom I dare not name, because he is still living, tho' now extremely old)':

> I resolved to purchase, study, and examine carefully such *Spiritual* and *Dogmatic Authors*, as I knew this *venerable* Man did most approve and delight in. In this manner I collected a *Set of Religious Books* and *Writers*, of most of the *First Ages* since *Christianity*, recommended by him, with a few of the Moderns, which have been my *Study, Delight*, and *Entertainment* in my Retirements ever since; and on these I have formed my *Ideas, Principles*, and *Sentiments* (EM, p. 333).

The identity of this guide to 'Primitive Christianity' remains a mystery.[10] Cheyne's obvious desire to emphasise the orthodoxy of his spiritual mentor is characteristic of what will emerge as his mature stance of outward conformity[11]

In 1706, Cheyne reduced his intake of meat and strong drink and permanently abandoned suppers. His professional interest in dietary regimens began at this personal level. For a year after his crisis he was a little revived and in the spring of 1707 he visited Bath for the first time as a patient. He recovered some of his former spirits and returned to eating meat, but this prompted a hectic fever in the autumn. By the spring of 1708 his symptoms were worse, and 'the Continuance of my Miseries, and the Constant Complaints, common to *Hypish* People, made life a burden to myself, and a Pain to my Friends'. That summer he was reminded by a clergyman of

---

9 This valuable distinction is made in John Hoyles Waning of the Renaissance, pp. 7-8, in a discussion of Henry More's childhood 'conversion' prompted by reading the Theologica Germanica, an important repository of Protestant mysticism which Cheyne admired. More's *Little Narrative of Himself* printed posthumously in Richard Ward's Life..of Dr Henry More (1710), may have been a model for Cheyne's *Case of the Author*.

10 I agree with Rousseau's reasons for rejecting candidates such as Newton, Clarke, and Ramsay. He strongly favours Whiston, but he was only 65-6 when Cheyne was writing. Cheyne himself was 59-60 and, as someone who thought 140 was a not an impossible life expectancy, he was less likely to describe Whiston as 'extremely old'. In 1705 Cheyne took Keill's side against Whiston over the issue of Mosaic history in both editions of the Philosophical Principles, and later he condemned the Arian heresy for which Whiston lost his Cambridge chair (ER, pp. 186-7). Rousseau rejects Craige, the most obvious candidate, because he died in 1731, but Cheyne may have written his 'Case' a year or so before 1733, when it was published (*IDC*, p. 93, f.42).

11 ER, Preface and pp. 186-7.

the case of a certain Dr Taylor of Croydon, who had cured himself of epilepsy with a diet of milk.[12] In the autumn Cheyne visited Taylor, and at his recommendation, adopted a milk and vegetable diet whilst spending the winter in London. He consequently lost weight and found some ease (EM, p. 333-5).

The next Spring (1709), still suffering from a disordered stomach, he took to riding fifteen miles a day, a pursuit he later recommended to such nervous patients as the obese Samuel Richardson. Despite the distractions of illhealth, Cheyne continued to pursue his medical profession, specialising in chronic and nervous cases 'they seeming more immediately to concern myself' (EM, pp. 335-38). Over the summer of 1709 he resorted to the use of Jesuit's Bark (Quinine), to relieve his stomach disorder and this eventually resulted in a remarkable recovery which lasted throughout the winter and following year. But his sufferings were to continue. By becoming over-confident at returning to a 'common' diet, he developed a protracted 'deputory' fever in the spring of 1711. He was treated by a Dr Baynard, who encouraged a gradual return to a normal diet. Although perpetually 'hectic and restless', he gradually weaned himself back into moderate wine-drinking and 'common-life' (EM, pp. 338-40). The next twelve years were to see him in relative good health, but losing a continuous battle against obesity as he found himself torn between the gluttonous indulgences of city life and repentant bouts of semi-rural abstinence at Bath. His eventual expansion to 32 stone and an inevitable second major crisis is recorded in a later chapter.

## 'Spiritual Friends'

In 1713, (before publication of the 'mystical' revisions to the Philosophical Principles (1715)), Johann Bernoulli told Leibniz that 'Cheyne, once a great idolater of Newton, has given up mathematics, so I hear: he is to live for the future as a member of some visionary sect or other, after the example of Fatio, not to say Whiston himself, who strives to revive Arianism'.[13] This is the remark of a professed critic of Cheyne, living at some distance from England, in Basle, but as a garbled and hostile account of Cheyne's religious reorientation, it is probably typical of the derisive rumours which surrounded him at this relatively obscure time in his career. In fact, as will emerge, Bernoulli conflates what were two quite distinct religious groups when he refers to

---

[12] Taylor remains obscure. He did not publish his 'Milk and Seed Diet'. He was probably an adherent of the Pythagorean doctrines flourishing amongst dissenters, a vegetarian tradition to which Cheyne's own work belongs. This tradition has not been documented but see Rousseau, *IDC*, p. 101, f.66.

[13] Newton, Corr., Vol.VI., pp. 67-68, Letter 1043, (translation from Latin) .

Cheyne's fellow 'visionary' Newtonians, Nicholas Fatio De Duillier and William Whiston.[14] Nevertheless this anecdote prompts an examination of the precise circumstances surrounding Cheyne's intellectual shift away from mathematics into mysticism.

As G. S. Rousseau illustrates, previous accounts of Cheyne's 'heretical' Newtonianism have overlooked the specific sources of his new-found mystical doctrines in the many 'enthusiastic' millenarian sects which were active at the time.[15] Although Cheyne emphasised the social isolation of his first spiritual crisis he was soon to find others who shared his search for 'more enlightening *Principles*'. His contact with these fellow 'spiritual seekers' had a crucial effect upon his understanding of illness and healing, sensibility, sanity and madness.[16] The remainder of this chapter (and the subsequent chapter), is devoted to a detailed account of Cheyne's contact with a complex network of interrelated Protestant sects at this crucial phase of his intellectual development.

We have no details of Cheyne's activities from 1705-7, during his initial 'withdrawal', but by 1708 he was in close contact with members of the Scottish quietist circle described in 1934, by G. D. Henderson, as the 'Mystics of the North-East'.[17] From the 1680s onwards, this informal circle of Episcopalian clergymen, scholars and aristocrats forged close links with a number of pietist sects on the Continent. Cheyne's close social connections with this important network dedicated to bringing the ideas and literature of a Continental pietist enlightenment to Britain, probably pre-dated his association with Pitcairne, although it remains impossible to

---

14 Fatio de Duillier, the exiled Swiss mathematician and close friend (lover ?) of Newton, upset the scientific establishment in 1706 when he joined the Camisard Prophets and served as their secretary (Charles A. Domson, *Nicholas Fatio De Duillier and the Prophets of London* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, 1972)). Whiston also shared in the interest in millennial calculations found amongst Newton's circle, but denounced the Prophets as deluded. After being personally chosen by Newton to take his place in the Lucasian Chair at Cambridge, Whiston lost the post in 1710 for his professed Arianism. He promoted 'primitive Christianity' in popular works of Newtonian philosophy. See E. M. Force William Whiston: Honest Newtonian (C.U.P., 1985), *passim.*

15 *IDC*, p. 122, f.111.

16 Rousseau, *Psychology* in The Ferment of Knowledge ed. by G. S. Rousseau and R. Porter (CUP., 1980), p. 198.

17 G. D. Henderson, Third Spalding Society, (Aberdeen, 1934), gives a brief account of Cheyne (pp. 65-67). It centres around the editing of letters which passed between the Aberdonian Dr James Keith, resident in London and his patron Lord Deskford, of Cullen House, Banffshire (1713-23). These establish Cheyne's contact from 1713. In NLS 'Fettercairn Papers', there is a bundle of fifty letters to Ramsay 'from his fellow mystics' dated 1708-1710 (Acc. 4796, 26b, hereafter 'NLS, 4796'). These reveal their activities prior to 1713; five letters from Cheyne prove that this association was established by 1708. Henderson only had access to the Fettercairn MSS for his Chevalier Ramsay (1952), (pp. 11-12), but again he did not discuss Cheyne.

know whether Cheyne was familiar with, or sympathetic towards, mystical pietism during his time as Pitcairne's pupil.

Cheyne would have known the two spiritual leaders of the Scottish 'mystics', the Nonjurors, George Garden (1649-1733), and his elder brother James (1645-1726), who both taught divinity at King's College, Aberdeen, in 1685-6 when Cheyne matriculated at the sister college, Marischal.[18] George Garden, a far more public figure than James (who after 1697 retired to rural Aberdeenshire), was Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Marischal, alongside Patrick Sibbald, the Professor of Divinity.[19] Sibbald and the Garden brothers maintained a 'mystical' tradition which drew strength from close cultural ties with Holland. It had earlier manifested itself in the Spiritual Exercises of John Forbes of Corse; private meditations written between 1624 and 1647 and circulated in manuscript, until published in their entirety, in a Latin version by George Garden as Opera Johannis Forbesii (Amsterdam, 2 vols, 1702-3). Garden was the pupil of Henry Scougall D.D. (1650-1678), another professor of divinity at King's, whose Life of God in the Soul of Man (1677), is probably the most famous work of Scottish devotional literature.[20] Here Scougall defines true Christianity as the 'Union of the Soul with God, real participation of the Divine Nature, the very Image of God drawn upon the Soul, or, in the Apostle's phrase, it is Christ formed within us...*a Divine Life*'.[21] It was with this Aberdeen version of Cambridge Platonism that Cheyne first became familiar with the pietist emphasis upon 'the Divine Life', or, as Henry More termed it, 'the fourth ground of certainty', an intellectual, spiritual tradition which informed Cheyne's own mature epistemology of religious belief.[22]

By 1705, many of Cheyne's Episcopalian associates, pushed into dissent by the Presbyterian establishment and disturbed by the sectarian divisions within Scotland, had turned to this distinctly introverted form of Christianity. They saw faith as resting primarily in a love for God, and they repudiated the need for divisive, ecclesiastical structures. They adopted quietist devotional practices aimed at promoting the mystical union of the individual soul with God. James Garden maintained this pietist tradition with his *Discursum Academicum de Theologia Comparativa* (1699),

---

18 James was elected Professor of Divinity at Kings College Aberdeen in 1681, but deposed as a Nonjuror in 1697. His adherence to Bourignonism hindered his case. Similarly, George Garden lost his ministry at the cathedral church of Old Machar, Aberdeen in 1701 (Mystics, pp. 61-62; pp. 35-36).

19 Fasti Academiciae: Mariscallanae, p. 13.

20. The first edition bears a preface by Cheyne's kinsman Gilbert Burnet. George Garden's funeral address for Scougall, prefixed to most editions of this work, is the principal account of its author.

21 Scougall, Life of God, p. 6.

22 Ibid., pp. 1-12; J. Garden, Comparative Theology, pp. i-iix (Edinburgh, 1707); G. Garden, An Apology for M. Bourignon (1699), pp. 1-13; J. Hoyles, Waning of the Renaissance (1971), p. 7. Cheyne encountered More's works as an undergraduate.

translated into English as Comparative Theology (1701), and based upon his divinity lectures at King's College. In this short, readable account of the fundamentals of faith he develops Scougall's notion of 'the Divine Life', whilst emphasising the need for religious tolerance. Some of this ecumenical spirit informed Cheyne's search for more 'enlightening *Principles*'. In 1733, Cheyne prefaced his pietist 'motto' (quoted above), with the comment that it has been the informing basis of all his '*Ideas, Principles*, and *Sentiments*:..under all the Varieties of *Opinions, Sects, Disputes*, and *Controversies*, that of late and since the *Earliest Ages*, have been canvassed and bandyed in the World' (EM, p. 333). Garden's writings also emphasise a fundamental Lapsarian theme, which underpins the quietist tradition and grew to dominate Cheyne's own medico-religious doctrines: the fallen nature of man is made manifest in the imperfection of his very thoughts and affections, which are constantly being seduced away from the 'Love of God' by the sensual pull of worldly creatures.[23] James Garden argues that since the Fall, 'this wretched Carcass of the World' differs from its divine original 'as a vile Dungeon does, from a Royal and Magnificent Palace'.[24] The first edition of his Philosophical Principles, shows that, even before his crisis, Cheyne was very much in agreement with this notion that the world as we know it reflects the curse of Adam's fall from grace and lacks its pristine harmony. During his crisis, the repentant Cheyne was attracted to Garden's potent imagery of corruption and criminality. Garden's precepts for drawing the sinner away from the 'love of the Creatures' and back to God, namely 'Repentance, Self-denial, renouncing the World, Crucifying the Flesh, taking up of the Cross, and putting off the Old Man', suggests one doctrinal source for Cheyne's subsequent asceticism.[25] However, as will soon emerge, Cheyne was equally drawn by the emphasis placed in this tradition upon God as the source of Divine Love and universal forgiveness.

During the 1690s, under the pressure of political persecution, the Garden brothers turned to the more militantly millenarian doctrines of the Flemish visionary, Antoinette Bourignon (1616-1680), and the teachings of other Continental 'illuminati'.[26] Bourignon put forward a doctrine of spiritual 'recollection' which involved 'stilling of the senses'. She was particularly iconoclastic in her rejection of all established outward forms of worship. Her heretical conceptions of the theological significance of the Fall and the Trinity show the influence of Augustine, Thomas à

---

23 Scougall, The Life of God, pp. 12-13; 58-59 and 91-92; Garden, Comparative Theology, pp. 16-49 and 30-1; G. Garden, Apology, pp. 19 and 45.

24 Comparative Theology, pp. 31-32.

25 Ibid., pp. 34-35.

26 A. R. McEwen, Antoinette Bourignon: Quietist (1910).

Kempis, and the theosophist Jacob Boehme and her promotion of notions of universal redemption, of Christ born out of a second, androgynous Adam, were condemned by Catholics and Protestants alike.[27] She was also dismissed as insane for the claim that her prolific 'automatic' writing was the product of divine inspiration. Such claims to 'spiritual gifts' by her and other *inspirés* brought a contemporary controversy concerning the validity of prophecy into sharp relief, as George Garden spent the 1690s defending her heresies as indications of her role as a true prophet of the millennium. The Bourignonist debate was of fundamental interest to Cheyne for social as well as theological reasons, and it prompted him to consider how an active providence may register its workings in the human body.

Heretical doctrines of spiritual 'Enlightenment' reached Scotland principally through the publishing activities of Pierre Poiret (1646-1719), with whom the Garden circle corresponded.[28] A learned Frenchman, originally trained as a Calvinist for the Protestant ministry at Basle, Poiret's early interest in Cartesianism, which parallels Cheyne's early commitment to Newtonianism, gave way to a deep concern for the principles of Christian theosophy. Under the influence of Dutch Arminianism (a movement which gave an important impetus to the early European Enlightenment), Poiret rejected the doctrine of pre-destination and embraced Bourignon's heresy of Universalism.[29] He abandoned his career in the Church and moved to a more tolerant Amsterdam, where, with the help of his former pupil, the printer Heinrich Wetstein, he began to edit, translate and publish an eclectic array of single and anthologised works of pietist and mystical theology, as well as commentaries of his own. These included an influential edition of the Theologia Germanica, a classic text of Protestant mysticism, which we know Cheyne valued highly.[30]

Poiret's publishing activities were not restricted to modern or ancient works, nor limited to writers in just the Protestant or Catholic traditions as his eclectic principal work L'Oeconomie Divine (Amsterdam, 1687) illustrates.[31] James Garden's Comparative Theology, which provided the rationale for this ecumenicism, was

---

27 Ibid., pp. 46-84; Garden, Apology, pp. 41 and 72-74. Bourignon always maintained that these speculative ideas were only 'accessories' that need not be fully accepted by followers of true religion which is fundamentally the love of God (Garden, Apology, pp. 12-13).

28 Henderson, Mystics, pp. 14-20; Max Weiser, Peter Poiret (1932).

29 For Arminianism, Rosie Colie Light and Enlightenment (CUP, 1957), Ch. 1. She does not discuss Poiret (noted at p. 105), but her study provides a valuable account of the Dutch intellectual climate to which Cheyne was exposed. For the heresy of Universal Salvation, D. P. Walker, The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment, (1974), passim.

30 In 1742, he was asking Richardson to find him the English translation of Luther's Latin edition, although he already had 'the best French edition' (Mullett, Letters, p. 113-4).

31 English translation, London, 6 vols, 1713.

reprinted in Poiret's Theologia Pacificae (1702), a work named in a surviving list of Poiret's books which Cheyne received direct from Holland in about 1708.[32] Poiret also published Garden's work as Part I of his eclectic Biblioteca Mysticorum (Amsterdam, 1708), a 'mystical' anthology which was probably also in Cheyne's parcel: many years later Cheyne told Samuel Richardson where to obtain a copy of the Biblioteca Mysticorum, which he recommended as a model for a catalogue of pietist extracts he was encouraging Richardson to publish.[33]

Poiret provided Cheyne with a valuable scholarly model for making an intellectual transition from a mathematics-based, rational scientism to an enlightened mysticism: a theological move away from the absent 'Clock-Maker' God of Newton and Locke's 'reasonable' Christianity, to an affective religiosity based upon a more sentimental epistemology. After Bourignon's death, Poiret turned towards the less iconoclastic doctrines of 'Naked Faith and Pure Love' being promoted by the French mystic, Madame Guyon (1646-1719), and her defender, Francis De Salignac Fénelon, the Archbishop of Cambray (1651-1715).[34] From at least 1708 onwards, Cheyne was kept closely informed of quietist activity in France when Andrew Michael Ramsay, George Garden and other Scottish quietists, began to visit Fénelon at Cambray and Guyon at her retreat in Blois. He became an intimate member of the network established by Garden in the 1690s for promoting Poiret's mystical-pietist texts throughout Britain. Cheyne's close friend, Dr James Keith, an Aberdonian physician resident in London, acted as Poiret's agent, organising the importation and

---

32 Henderson remarks: 'In the present writer's copy of Theologiae Pacificae (1702) (including Poiret's Latin edition of Garden's Comparative Theology) there is written on the flyleaf, in Cheyne's handwriting: "Direct for Dr Cheyne at Bath till the end of Octr. at Mr Skine's apothecary. After that for him at London to be left at the Old Man's Coffee House near Charing Cross, Westminster", the reference being to certain of Poiret's Books and G. Garden's Apology for M. A. Bourignion' (p. 104). This was Cheyne's post-restante address in 1708-9. Regrettably Henderson did not list the other titles and my efforts to trace this copy have been fruitless.

33 Mullett, Letters, Letter LXXI, p. 111. and below, Chapter 10. Cheyne's associate, John Robertson M.D., visited James Garden in his last years, and published an edition of Comparative Theology (Bristol 1756).

34 Poiret first published Guyon's Moyen Court et Trés facile de Faire Oraison, (Paris, 1685), along with other related pieces in an anthology entitled Recueil de Divers Traitez de Théologia Mystique qui entrent dans la...dispute du Quiétism qui s'agite presentement en France (Cologne, 1699). He later published editions of her individual works, letters, poems etc., such as the Opuscules Spirituels (Cologne, 1704), all of which were being imported in quantity by Dr Keith and Cheyne for distribution in Britain by 1713. Fenelon's defence of quietism, the Explication des Maximes des Saints sur la Vie Interieure (Paris, 1697), containing his doctrine of 'Pure Love', was frequently translated as a Dissertation on Pure Love (1735). See, J. H. Davis, Fénelon, (Boston, 1979), Chapter 4; M. de la Bédoyere, The Archbishop and the Lady: the story of Fénelon and Madame Guyon, (1956); and R. A. Knox, Enthusiasm (Oxford, 1950), Chapter XIV.

distribution of his books.[35] As such, Keith maintained a correspondence with Poiret and other Continental quietists, forwarding letters and shipments of books to their Scottish adherents.[36] After Keith's death in 1726, Cheyne took over his role as a leading agent in this intriguing network. Considering Cheyne's intimacy with many of the most prominent Augustan *literati,* he must be acknowledged as perhaps the most important disseminator of pietist literature and doctrines in Britain of the early eighteenth century.

After Bourignon's death in 1680, Poiret had moved to Rhijnsburg, near Leyden, where he established a quietist community. Poiret's group, along with the Collegiants and several other unorthodox sects which flourished about Leyden and other Dutch university towns must have been known to Pitcairne and visiting Scottish medical students, (with possibly Cheyne amongst them), in the 1690s. Pitcairne's circle certainly had ample opportunity of encountering the heresies of Bourignonism.[37] During the 1690s, George Garden, in association with Poiret, was responsible for the appearance of six English editions of Bourignon's anthologised prose, letters and poems. Under constant denunciation by the Presbyterian Assembly, George Garden established a religious community, modelled on Poiret's Rhinjsburg group, at Rosehearty on the Banffshire coast, on the estate of a sympathiser, Alexander, Lord Forbes of Pitsligo (1678-1762).[38] Pitsligo, an important Jacobite ideologue (Scott's model for 'Tullibardine' in Waverley), first encountered mystical theology during a youthful sojourn on the Continent. He was Cheyne's admired patient by 1708-9, and they remained life-long friends.[39] Pitsligo was a leading patron of the Scottish quietist

---

35 Keith and Cheyne probably met at university and both turned to medicine because of their Episcopalian loyalties after 1689. They had close family ties: Cheyne's 'cousin' Dr Charles Maitland is a trustee in Keith's will (Mystics, p. 59).

36 Keith informed Deskford of Cheyne's seasonal journeys between London and Bath from 1713 to 1718, and passed on messages of regard and service between Cheyne, Deskford, Forbes, Ramsay, and the other members of the circle, with whom it is clear Cheyne maintained his own correspondence.

37 There is some slight evidence for the Pitcairne and Garden circles overlapping, but I find nothing to indicate, as G. S. Rousseau seems to imply (*IDC*, p. 87-8), that Pitcairne was sympathetic to Bourignonism. Certainly, before 1705, Poiret's ideas were circulating in Pitcairne's virtuosi circle: see Appendix I.

38 In 1701, George Garden was deposed by the General Assembly. Between 1695 and 1711 the General Assembly in Edinburgh repeatedly issued declarations branding Bourignonism heretical (Mystics, pp. 32-38; McEwen, pp. 5-19). Andrew Honeyman's Bourignonism Display'd, (Aberdeen, 1710) acknowledges the need for religious rejuvenation 'which the desperate Age so much wants for' but condemns Garden for making himself 'the Head of a Partie' and retiring 'unto a Corner of the Countrey, where he is flocked unto from all Parts of The Kingdom...there to erect a sort of a mixt Mungrel, Monasterial-Nunery, whence with large commendations he disperses the books of A[ntonia]. B[ourignon]' (p. xxii). Honeyman is vociferously indiscriminate in his accusations of Popery, heresy, and sexual misconduct.

39 Henderson, Mystics, pp. 44-6; NLS, 4796; Lord Medwyn's introduction to Pitsligo's Thoughts Concerning Man's Condition (4th edition, Edinburgh, 1854); and Scott's prefatorial 'review' in same.

movement, as was Lord Deskford, IInd. Earl of Seafield (1690-1764), who was also an intimate patron of Cheyne by 1708.[40]

The frequent charges that Bourignonism was Roman Catholicism in disguise were blatantly incorrect, but accusations that her Scottish adherents were Jacobites were not so misguided. All the leading figures in the Scottish quietist movement were open Jacobites in 1715, and their mystical-millenarian beliefs went hand-in-hand with their hopes of a Stuart restoration.[41] It is not known if Cheyne's sympathies with the Garden circle extended to support for Jacobite invasion and we should not judge his political leanings by mere association, but by 1708 he was familiar with both sides of the argument over the Bourignonist heresy and was asking Garden's 'disciple' Andrew Michael Ramsay to 'let me know who are to retire to Rosehearty & how they are to live & employ the intervalls of their Time & if they are to have any correspondence without their own Society. May the Spirit of Peace, Wisdom and Divine Joy direct them'.[42] Despite such sympathetic interest, as will emerge shortly, Cheyne had misgivings about Bourignonism.

The addressee of this enquiry, Andrew Michael Ramsay (1686?-1743), (later titled the 'Chevalier'), was soon to go into French exile (1710), where he became a Catholic convert and Fénelon's pupil, secretary and biographer. By the time of Fénelon's death in 1715, Ramsay was also a close associate of Madame Guyon, and he was with George Garden and other British adherents at her deathbed in 1717. Ramsay kept in close correspondence with Drs. Keith and Cheyne, with whom he had been intimate in the years immediately preceding his exile.[43] Henderson has argued

---

40 Cheyne knew Deskford's father, Lord Findlater, and became a trusted friend of the son who was under his medical care (along with Dr Keith), in London by 1708. Keith kept Deskford regularly informed of Cheyne's circumstances between 1713 and 1723, during which period Cheyne undertook various services for Deskford. In 1713 Cheyne was deeply involved in what proved to be fruitless negotiations towards a prospective marriage between Deskford and the daughter of Sir William Ellys of Nocton (Mystics, passim; Cheyne to Deskford, 1713, SRO, GD 248/561/ f.49, 57 and f. 48, 52).

41 Murray Pittock plays down the role of Pitsligo's millenarian beliefs, in *Jacobitism in the North-East: the Pitsligo Papers in Aberdeen University library*, Aberdeen and the Enlightenment, ed. by J. J. Carter and J. H. Pittock (A.U.P., 1986), but the mystical-millenarian motivation behind Jacobitism as manifest in Pitsligo's circle demands further consideration.

42. Cheyne to Ramsay, 5 June, 1708 (NLS, 4976). By about 1708, Cheyne owned Garden's Apology for M. Antonia Bourignon (1699), translated from Latin with the help of Dr James Keith. He probably saw the pamphlets of Garden's brother-in-law and critic, Dr John Cockburn (1652-1729), the Episcopalian pastor in Amsterdam, with whom Cheyne was in correspondence by 1708. Cockburn wrote a number of polemical works including Bourignonism Display'd (1699), (DNB IV, pp. 654-47; NLS, 4796). At the height of the Bourignonist controversy, George Garden asked Cheyne to intercede with Deskford over a promise to see if 'a passe could be obtain'd for my Prodigal Son, if he be alive an willing to return home' (Ibid., Garden to Ramsay, 2 Feb., 1709). This son had probably been engaged in Jacobite activities.

43 Henderson, Mystics, pp. 51-5, and Chevalier Ramsay, passim.

convincingly for Cheyne and Ramsay first meeting at Edinburgh about 1701, when Ramsay was attending university. Cheyne's letters of 1708-9, which provide a precious glimpse into his early contact with quietism, rest alongside others from Ramsay's fellow students at Edinburgh, James Lundie and John Stevenson, both of whom, by 1708-9, were studying medicine under Boerhaave at Leyden from where they also corresponded with Cheyne.[44]

All Lundie's surviving letters reveal his interest in quietism and by July of 1709 he had visited Poiret, reporting to Ramsay (and presumably Cheyne also), that 'all our friends are well at R[hijnsbur]g'.[45] He was proposing that Ramsay should undertake to translate Bourignon's spiritual poems and he was sending parcels of pietist books from Rhinjsburg to Ramsay, Cheyne and the other members of their circle.[46] The contents of one these parcels was probably that which G. D. Henderson found listed, in Cheyne's handwriting, inside the flyleaf of a copy of Poiret's Theologiae Purae ac Pacificae Vera ac Solida Fundamenta, sive Theologia Comparativa (Amsterdam, 1702).[47] An extant, rather cryptic note from Ramsay to Cheyne of this period, concerning corrections to a translation the latter had made from the French, suggests that Cheyne was also translating continental pietist writings from an early date.[48] This was probably for private study and circulation in manuscript, but the time of his death in 1743 he was actively engaged in gaining Samuel Richardson's assistance in a related project to translate and publish pietist texts.[49]

---

[44] Lundie matriculated in 1701, the same year in which John Stevenson entered as a second year student (Henderson Ramsay, pp. 11-12). From Amsterdam, on December 7 1708, Lundie teased Ramsay for sending him the same short letters he had sent Cheyne: 'I mean cause me to pay postage for five or six lines tho' it must be confessed you have more to say for your self now than you had then' (NLS 4796). Dr James Lundie died at Haddington in 1777, at the age of 92 (GM, 1777, p. 507). Dr John Stevenson became a prominent Edinburgh physician, later known to Hume as the protector of the blind poet Thomas Blacklock. In 1742 he was arranging for Hutcheson to read Ramsay's *Philosophical Dialogues* and trying to persuade Hume to translate Ramsay's 'Chinese Letters', now lost (Letters of David Hume (Oxford, 1932), I, pp. 200-204). In later years Ramsay told of having met during his student days 'un tolerant parfait', 'un sage Pyronnien', who was critical of all religious sects. It seems likely that this was Pitcairne. The young Ramsay had medical aspirations. In 1710 he attended Boerhaave's lectures (Henderson, Ramsay pp. 11-12 and Lundie to Ramsay, 7 December 1708, NLS, 4796).

[45] Lundie to Ramsay, Rotterdam, 15 July, NLS, 4796.

[46] Ibid.. Ramsay's one small collection of verse, Some Few Poems (Edinburgh, 1728), was published without his knowledge from manuscripts he had left in Britain in 1710. There seems to be no ground for Henderson's argument that they were composed without any knowledge of Bourignon's or Guyon's spiritual lyrics, which they resemble.

[47] Mystics, p. 104.

[48] NLS, 4796.

[49] See Chapter 10.

In 1708-9 Cheyne and Ramsay were encouraging each other in what proved to be a mutual life-long concern with reconciling Newtonian and Lockeian concepts with mystical doctrines of spiritual enlightenment. In his biography of Fénelon, Ramsay portrayed himself at the time of his arrival at Cambray, as a young man engaged upon a spiritual quest not that dissimilar in its aim from the princely one he later portrayed in his popular philosophical romance The Travels of Cyrus (1727): 'Born in a free Country where the Mind of Man discovers itself in all its Forms without Restraint, I ran through the greatest Part of the Religions there profes'd in the Search of Truth. The Fanaticism or the Contradiction which prevails in all the different Systems of the protestants gave me an aversion to all Sects of Christianity'.[50] Ramsay's religious odyssey was being closely observed by Cheyne, who, dissatisfied with Pitcairne's freethinking Edinburgh circle, felt equally alienated by sectarianism.

The evidence for Cheyne's concern with Ramsay's religious quest serves to clarify Cheyne's own position regarding religious 'enthusiasm' at this date, but before this can be achieved it is necessary to provide some more brief details of Ramsay's early biography. In 1708 Ramsay was employed as a tutor, in the household of Sir Thomas Hope (1685-1729), Laird of Craighall at Ceres, near Cupar in Fife.[51] Sir Thomas had close connections with Dutch pietists through a branch of his family who were merchant-bankers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, several of whom became Quakers. His Scoto-Dutch kinsman, Archibald Hope, was a colleague of the banker and bibliophile Benjamin Furly (friend of Locke and Shaftesbury), and they shared sympathies with Bourignonism and other unorthodox sects.[52] Back in Fife, Sir Thomas was also sympathetic to quietism and corresponded with Poiret.[53] Hope became acquainted with Ramsay through a mutual friend and neighbour, Alexander

---

50 Ramsay, Life of Fénelon (1723), p. 190. For Cheyne's involvement in the English translation see below Chapter 8. Ramsay wrote that he was a deist when he first met his spiritual director Fenelon (who soon convinced him that if he was a Christian he must embrace the Church of Rome), but his correspondence before he left Britain shows that he was more already deeply engaged with at least one Christian sect, namely the Scottish Bourignonists. Ramsay recalled that 'to go headlong into Deism was I thought a bold Step. To take up with any Sect of Christians appear'd to me a childish Weakness. I wander'd without being able to find a fix'd point. It was in these Dispositions that I came to Cambray' (Ibid. pp. 191-2). It was Poiret's Bourignonist community at Rhijnsburg near Leyden that Ramsay first visited when he left Britain in 1710, before moving on to Fenelon.

51 Sir Thomas is sometimes, confusingly, called Hope-Bruce, because in 1715, he succeeded to the estates of his step-father, William Bruce of Kinross in 1706. He belonged to an eminent legal family and Cheyne probably met him as a student in Edinburgh. (Henderson, Mystics, p. 77.)

52 W. I. Hull, Benjamin Furly and Quakerism in Rotterdam, (Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, No. 5, 1941), pp. 247-253, pp. 82ff; pp. 137-155. Furly's library contained many works reflecting his interest in the mystical tradition that Poiret was promoting.

53 Lundie, who also knew Furly, carried the letters and the replies were to pass through Keith in London (Lundie to Ramsay, Rotterdam, 15 July 1709, NLS, 4796).

Bayne of Rives (sometimes 'Logie', d. 1737), another sympathiser, who in 1722 became the first professor of Scots Law at Edinburgh University.[54] Bayne also introduced Ramsay to another Fifeshire gentleman, James Cunningham of Barnes, who also took a deep interest in 'interior religion'. By 1708 Cheyne numbered all these close associates of George Garden and Pitsligo amongst his 'bosom friends'.[55]

With a deep concern for Ramsay's spiritual and material welfare, Cheyne advised him throughout the period immediately before his departure for Holland in 1710, during which period Ramsay's commitment to quietism, manifested itself in a desire to leave Craighall and join Garden's Bourignoist community. Whilst at Craighall, and later, just before his departure for Rhijnsburgh, Pitsligo offered to patronise Ramsay's desire to live in retreat at Rosehearty. Garden told Ramsay that Sir Thomas Hope did not approve of this plan, but he reassured him that God could be served anywhere.[56] Sir Thomas was more sympathetic to an offer that Ramsay become tutor to the children of David, Lord Wemyss (Third Earl of Elcho), who as a Representative Peer for Scotland in 1707 and 1708, had established a household in Soho Square, London, and a country retreat at 'Thistleworth' (now Isleworth) on the Thames.[57] Cheyne had in fact been instrumental in getting the Earl to offer to employ Ramsay through the mediation of Alexander Bayne, who at the time was Wemyss' London secretary.[58]

Prompted by Wemyss's impatience at Ramsay's hesitation, Cheyne wrote to Ramsay On 28 October, 1708, to reassure him that the rural setting of 'Isleworth' would allow him to continue his spiritual practices undisturbed:

> Your pupills are to be at a publick school in a country retired place by a riverside amidst Gardens. You may lodge and dyet out of the house, and have nothing to do with them but after

---

54 Henderson Mystics, p. 77; W. Menzies, *Alexander Bayne of Rives, Advocate* Juridical Review, 36, (1924). Bayne married Sir Thomas's daughter and his granddaughter married a Leith Cheyne. Their son was the nerve specialist Dr John Cheyne (1777-1836); see his 'Autobiographical Sketch' in Essays (Dublin, 1843).

55 Cheyne wrote to his 'particular good friend, Sir Thomas Hope', but their correspondence is apparently not extant. (to Ramsay, London, 28 October 1708, NLS, 4797). The Bourignonist circle at Craighall did not go unnoticed by orthodox Presbyterian, Thomas Halyburton, who, as minister of nearby Ceres, wrote in his diary for 1707, that with some followers of Bourignon 'infecting' his parish 'the Lord directed me to strike at the root of prevailing delusions' (Works, p. 763). Significantly Halyburton, a vehement opponent of 'freethinking', never equates Pitcairne's heresies with those of Bourignonist 'enthusiasm'.

56. Forbes to Ramsay, undated [1709 ?] and Garden to Ramsay, 5 February 1709, (NLS, 4976)

57 Henderson, Ramsay, p. 18. Ramsay taught David, Lord Elcho (1698-1715), and his brother James (1699-1756), who succeeded Fourth Earl 1720.

58 Bayne to Ramsay, London [1708], (NLS, 4976). Bayne's letters to Wemyss from November 1711 to April 1713 printed in Sir William Fraser, Memorials of the House of Wemyss (Edinburgh, 1888), iii, pp. 180-192. Cheyne's spiritual concerns did not hinder him employing Bayne's professional skills in 1709: 'My service to Mr Bayne. If he can get any Government Security for my money that he likes let him put it in there if no other occasion offer' (to Ramsay, 1 June 1709, NLS, 4976).

> schooling to con over their lessons and hear them say their prayers and see them to bed, where the more you are notic'd and the less you are in company the better you discharge your duty, which you may have when you please to abandon when you can no longer preserve your recollection in it.[59]

This shows a practical understanding of Ramsay's adherence to the Bourignonist doctrine of 'recollection'. As further reassurance, Cheyne explains that Wemyss, is 'one who was bred with no likeing for the heresy you are ting'd with, and now has no dislike to it, who knows your dispositions and their unacceptableness to the present age...I can't tell if you may not be less distracted there than any place you can be'.[60] Whilst this overt allusion to heresy could be interpreted as critical we have to bear in mind that he was to close this letter by sending 'my most hearty service to Sir Thomas, Barnes (to whom I will write shortly) and all our Spiritual friends'.

Cheyne was afraid of offending his 'particular good friend Sir Thomas Hope', but suggested that 'it seems to me to be pointed out by providence (if such a sinfull wretch as I durst presume to read his appointments), that you ought to leave your retreat a while for it is not of your seeking'.[61] In keeping with what has been said earlier of Cheyne's high regard for education, he notes that teaching 'two well dispos'd young Gentlemen...may possibly have a considerable influence on the next age' and 'forming tender minds to virtue...may be the only probable Good that is to be done in this corrupt age'.[62] This sense of social and moral decline was to inform his own career as a medical-moralist. A month later Cheyne sent effusive thanks for a reply to an earlier letter with a 'folio epistle' (not extant), in which a still undecided Ramsay had discussed an 'Article' (attacking Bourignonism?):

> If the Material heads of the Mystick Divinity were gone over as you have this Article, it would be an usefull amusement to your self at your leisure hours an inexpressible favour to me, by the blessing of our wise and Gracious God, (to whom I hope you and I both dedicat all our Thoughts, word and deeds), & this time may possibly be of use to others. I am far from desiring or expecting (whatever my words in banter might insinuat) that you should in the least straiten yourself or lay out any time on this that you would not possibly spend on some more profitable amusement, yea I should neither pardon myself for putting you on such an inconvenience, nor much value what came through constraint but if you will converse with trees and plants mostly and have no more momentuous design on your hands go on and prosper.[63]

---

59 Cheyne to Ramsay, NLS, 4976.

60 Again Halyburton provides useful corroboration: he recorded that as household chaplain to Weemys in 1699 he was drawn into unorthodox religious discussions which led him to read writers 'of an infectious and dangerous nature' (Works, p. 708). By 1707 Wemyss was describing his retired, ascetic life in England and his 'quietist' indifference to 'the rattle and pleasures of London' (Memorials, III, p. 176).

61 Cheyne to Ramsay, London, 28 October 1708, NLS, 4796.

62 Ibid..

63 Cheyne to Ramsay, London, 29 November, 1708, NLS, 4796.

By encouraging Ramsay to study mystical literature (his own practice at this period), Cheyne hoped that the eclectic study of more orthodox contemplatives would wean Ramsay away from the extreme doctrines of Bourignon. Behind his banter Cheyne had serious misgivings and was privately appealing to God to guide Ramsay. In keeping with many mystical writers, he warned that the spiritual novitiate should be humble and cautious when acting upon initial inspiration:

> Remember that you are but young and in all probability may have a long time to live, that you now condemn some of your former Measures when you first came to see the truth [.] That young people reading serious and pious books may possibly have something common with those who first read Romances and books of Knight errantry, they are presently for becoming an Almanzor a Heroe and an Alexander may there not be a Spiritual Ambition as well as pride? I think Casian makes Discretion the Greatest of the Christian as well as of the moral virtues and by the Lamp of the Body of religion, now, is the only convenient season of your life for activity. [the?] rest may be proper for Silence Solitude and Quiet, if you neglect this opportunity, you must resolve for the future to sit still (Ibid..)

Although already liable to be labelled an 'enthusiast', Cheyne was himself cautious and critical of religious enthusiasm.

Ramsay also sought advice from Dr James Keith, who shared Cheyne's reluctance to give any specific directive. Keith resorted to repeating a proverbial maxim amongst this circle, that one should open oneself up to God who will send signs or internal prompts as guidance. But Keith warns:

> It requires an uncommon Fund of Recollection & disengagement to be able to stand in a State of Solitude & separation from the Creatures, as on the other hand 'tis no easy matter to preserve ones Innocency & inward Attention amidst the Noisy Converse of this World. Great Difficulties & dangers on every side! Every where Bonds & Imprisonments await us & our whole Life is but continual Warfare. In short 'tis not in us to Stand, or fall to recover our selves. Our God must be our all.[64]

Cheyne shared an interest in medicine with several of his Scottish quietist associates, but at this period he particularly benefited from Dr Keith's conversations, telling Ramsay: 'the more I know him I still the more admire him as a wise and Good man, who knows spiritual matters more distinctly and without the Animal heat and ferment, speculatively and I hope (and believe in a great measure) practically of most men I converse with'.[65] All the key pietist concepts which permeate Keith's

---

64 Keith to Ramsay, London, 11 November 1708, NLS, 4796.

65 Cheyne to Ramsay, London, 29 November 1708, NLS 4976. Lundie, Stevenson and Keith, and George Garden all took an interest in medicine and Garden attended Boerhaave's lectures in Leyden in 1710. Boerhaave studied the primitive fathers and inclined to a pietism similar to that of Poiret, as Dr Samuel Johnson emphasises in his 'Life'; see Andrew Cunningham *Medicine to Cure the Mind* The Medical Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century edited by Cunningham and R. French (C.U.P., 1990), passim..

correspondence of this period came to underpin Cheyne's medical practice and he shared Keith's concern to balance the speculative with the practical side of spiritual studies.[66] Cheyne endorsed Keith's advice to Ramsay: 'He said some wise and weighty things about your measures'.

Despite Ramsay's irritating indecisiveness, throughout 1708 Cheyne remained tolerant: 'come or stay in solitude or society, dead or alive you shall allwaies have my prayers Love & friendship if they were worth the acceptance'.[67] But Cheyne was offering this advice in the lulls between repeated bouts of illhealth and derangement. From 1705 to 1711 he was a soul in torment, filled with the conviction that God was putting him, an unworthy creature, on trial in order to reveal deep spiritual truths and providential patterns. His letters of 1708-9, by far the most intimate to survive, were written under a shadow of humiliation and self-condemnation and with a repentant, even morbid self-awareness of bodily corruption. They are punctuated with remorseful reflections upon his distracted spirits. He urges that his advice be treated as 'if it were suggested by the most contemptible Creature upon the earth'. In a characteristic comment he portrays himself as 'a sinful wretch', trapped in a fallen world: 'I am in all the distraction imaginable, but much more by my own fault than that of other's and without the consolation of one to whom I dare speak or will hear a Great Truth, viz. that we are all wood [i.e. lunatic or frantic]'; self-mockingly closing, 'dear Ramsay think on me when you remember the mad folks'.[68] Clearly there were times when he felt that his sanity was seriously endangered.

Almost exactly a year later he was in the same repentant mood: 'I ought to suspect every thing that proceeds from so impure a fountain as my heart. Oh Ramsay I find an infinit source of uncleaness there, all my Exterior and Interior is meerly the effect of a broken Constitution, but enough of this'.[69] He was overwhelmed with his debts to his 'merciful Father' who 'continues to do Miracles of Mercies for me. O I have a Great Deal of Mercies to Answer for. I dare scarce think on them, they so confound me to account for them & shame me for not making suitable returns'.[70] He was a man

---

66 Cheyne told Ramsay of another Scottish friend at Bath, a 'Mr Bambriggs', who 'is a generous frank rattle, but wants a Great Deal of Composure and solidity. Both Barnes and I have bin continually bantering him for one thing or another, but especially for his aversion to D[r] K[eith]. I cannot say that it is deep rooted, but it gets too oft into the conversation, it can arise from nothing but that the D[octor] will not flatter nor bear with his faults. I shall endeavour to set him right as far as my Serious or Jocular insinuations can prevail with him, for Indeed he is very far in the wrong and I cannot tell if his speculations have not done him harm' (Cheyne to Ramsay, 1 June, 1709 NLS, 4976).

67 29 November 1708, NLS, 4796. Gushing sentiments are a common feature of the private exchanges of the quietists.

68 Cheyne to Ramsay, Bath, 5 June 1708, NLS, 4976.

69 Bath, 1 June 1709, NLS, 4976.

70 Ibid., 29 November, 1708.

waiting for 'divine directions' and signs of God's grace: 'I would fain hope that sometime I shall be delivered from the devil, the world and my self, I will wait in patience for the joyful day'.

In early 1709, Cheyne was overjoyed when Ramsay finally accepted the post at 'Isleworth' and joined him in his English exile. Cheyne went off to Bath for the Season but, as he told Ramsay, he found himself 'frequently out of order as I used to be in the Spring mostly'. He had been unable to find time 'to sit down to the Papers' (presumably his revisions to the Philosophical Principles ), 'writing and study being the most prejudicial thing of any to me...if I grow better as I used to do towards the Autumn I will do all I can infinit Wisdom thinks fitt to use our poor corrupt endeavours, he will enable us, what is the matter what we do so we have him for our end, and keep him in our view in all we do'. He was unable to find any peace of mind: 'I scarce know what recollection is my spirits are allwise for one reason or another so hurried & unsettled & it seems more out of my power to compose 'em but I fear it is all in my will. Pity me and pray for me, for Ramsay I will not fail you if I am not left by my heavenly father'.[71] Highly sensitive to the particular ways in which God brought him hope and enlightenment, his only solace was in the company of 'spiritual friends', patients from Scotland such as Lord Forbes of Pitsligo, his sister Jean and Cunningham of Barnes: 'O Ramsay I am infinitely indebted to my Kind and Merciful Father who in his providence has sent...so very well dispos'd persons to cherish & enliven a little the dying Sparks of Virtue in my breast in this Place where there is no conversation but with all the vanities & pollutions of the World, & I have a heart susceptible of it, at least its amusements'.[72] He found Lady Jean to be 'an extraordinary person, serious, sensible and recollected much like her Brother, who has more recollection than any body I ever yet met with so far as I can learn'.[73] Cheyne felt blessed by their providential arrival:

> I seem to my self to be one marked out for Miracles of Mercies, that I may be render'd quite inexcusable. I am almost resolv'd in some short time if it be the will of God, to leave all and wait on him without distraction, but no will of mine, if it proceeds only thence can be Good and I will therefore think of this seriously and with the advice of my best and wisest friends and I cannot yet be well sure and therefore rekon this but a flight of converse.[74]

In view of his earlier advice to Ramsay, it is ironic that Cheyne was now considering going into complete religious retirement, presumably at Rosehearty on the Banffshire

---

71 Ibid., I June, 1709.

72 Cheyne to Ramsay, Bath 5 June, 1709, NLS, 4976.

73 Ibid. June 1 and 5, 1709.

74 Cheyne to Ramsay, Bath 5 June, 1709, NLS, 4976.

estate of Alexander and Jean Pitsligo, who may have offered a distraught Cheyne the same patronage for such a move as they had offered (and were again to offer), Ramsay.[75] However Cheyne never abandoned his professional practice to join the Banffshire Bourignonists or any other sect. Instead, he turned that practice over to the service of God and his redemptive plans, creating a marriage between primitive Christianity and what his patient, John Wesley, later termed 'Primitive Physick'.[76]

After his initial crisis, the psychological obsessions of quietism provided Cheyne with a fresh conceptual and poetic vocabulary of sentiment, with which he could come to terms with his own experiences of mental and physical disequilibrium and social marginalization. Traditional medical metaphors alluding to Jesus as a 'healer of souls' alerted him to the religious duties of a Christian physician. He came to view the task of healing the body and the spirit as interdependent. As Scougall describes:

> Holiness is the right temper, the vigorous and healthful constitution of the Soul: Its faculties had formerly been enfeebled, and disordered, so that they could not exercise their natural functions; it had wearied it self with endless tossings and rollings and was never able to find any rest: now that distemper is removed, and it feels it self well, there is a due harmony in all its faculties, and a sprightly vigour possesseth every part, the understanding can discern what is good, and the will can cleave unto it, the affections are not tyed to the motions of the sense, and the influence of External objects; but, they are stirred by more Divine Impressions and touched by a sense of invisible things.77

Such analogies (which recur throughout Scougall's work), are a commonplace of pietist writings which often discuss the traditional transition from the 'Old' to the 'New Man' in terms of healing. The pietist definition of holiness became Cheyne's professional definition of sanity, through a traditional Christian analogy which he later liked to summarise by quoting Juvenal's prescription proverb, *Mens sana in Corpore Sano*.[78] Throughout his lapses into 'nervous' distraction, Cheyne became only too aware of how, in the words of James Garden, the 'obstreperous Noise, and Din of blustering and tumultuating passions', prevent us hearing 'the Sweet Voice of God'.[79] He concludes his famous treatise on nervous illness The English Malady (1733), with the declaration that, 'if I mistake not my own Nature, I have the *Appetites, Passions* and *Feelings* common to other Men; and I usually ask myself the

---

[75] Cheyne's discussion of this possibility with friends may have been at the root of Bernoulli's anecdote of 1713 that Cheyne had joined 'some visionary sect or other'.

[76] There is clear evidence for him practicing at London and Bath from 1709 through until 1718, when he moved more or less permanently to Bath. The Rosehearty community disbanded in 1715 with the Continental exile of George Garden, Pitsligo and other members who joined the Jacobite Rebellion under a sense of divine providential guidance.

[77] Scougall, Life of God, pp. 38-39. For similar metaphors see Ibid., pp. 58-59; 78-79; 91-92 etc.

[78] For example, encouraging Samuel Richardson's 'rejuvenescence' in 1742 (Mullett, Letters, p. 101ff).

[79] Garden, Comparative Theology, pp. 37-38.

Question, and look into my own *Heart* for an *Answer*, to any thing proposed concerning human *Appetites, Passions* and *Feelings* that are Natural and not forced: and give little credit to what others say contrary to such *Sentiments* ' (p. 366). This sentimental introversion and concern with 'natural' feelings, was the most fundamental and lasting legacy of quietism to shape Cheyne's medico-philosophy, but if the quietist project of 'recollection' to achieve spiritual peace through 'stilling the senses' was an aim which attracted a distraught Cheyne, he was no Bunyan concerned with mapping the complexions of his soul. His professional interest in nervous disorders stemmed from a concern to alleviate physical symptoms of mechanical dysfunction, which distract the sufferer away from what, as a Neo-Platonist, he believed was an innate state of spiritual goodness and calm.

In his subsequent career Cheyne struggled to find a middle path, in both intellectual and practical terms between his conflicting duties to the creaturely world and God. On the one hand there was the necessary evil of worldly ambition, essential for social survival, and on the other a quest for spiritual regeneration, requiring retirement, and an ascetic detachment from the pull of a corrupt world of lapsed desires. The latter was motivated by his experience of a repetitious cycle of recovery and relapse which he came to equate, by analogy, with a vision of the fallen world of nature and natural man on the brink of millennial transformation. In 1708-9 Ramsay's dilemma echoed Cheyne's private nightmare of being torn between social connections which in the past had led to physical indulgence, breakdown, perhaps P yrhonnic doubt and guilt or, alternatively, studious social retirement and pious abstinence which left him marginalized as an 'enthusiast'. On a personal level, Cheyne only found escape from this conflict in the last decade of his life, after recovery from a second breakdown, to be discussed later, left him able to gain both health and social respect upon his own terms. On an intellectual level he was to resolve the tension between the opposing 'attractions' of the physical and spiritual worlds by formulating a theology, a moral psychology, and a medical practice founded upon the belief that this dialectic lay at the heart of all 'spiritual nature'.[80] As the second edition of the Philosophical Principles (1715) reveals, he found an underlying schema for this vision of opposing 'attractions' in the theosophical cosmology of the German mystic Jacob Boehme, whose theosophical system was familiar to many of Cheyne's 'spiritual friends'.

---

[80] Principles, (1715), Part II, esp. p. 67 ff.; Bowles, Attraction, pp. 479-84.

**Cheyne and The Philadelphians**

By 1709-10, through his friendships with Scottish Bourignonists, Cheyne had been exposed to an eclectic array of 'mystical' doctrines. Dr Hillel Schwartz has shown that 'seekers', like Ramsay and Keith, tended to shift their loyalties from one 'spiritual director' to another, blurring the edges of sectarian membership amongst several inter-related contemporary millenarian groups.[81] In 1710, Ramsay suddenly left Britain for Rhijnsburg, from where Poiret sent him on to France, and the less iconoclastic teachings of Guyon and her protector Fénelon. But by then Cheyne's Scottish circle already had close links with Continental and British followers of the Silesian visionary, Jacob Boehme (1575-1624).[82] Until G. S. Rousseau's recent study of Cheyne appeared, A. J. Kuhn was virtually the only modern scholar to have noted the Behmenist analogy between grace and desire which lies at the heart of Cheyne's theodicy, as first published in the Philosophical Principles (1715).[83] Cheyne's subsequent role in the Behmenist circle of the 1730s and 40s, centred around William Law, has long been noted and is the subject of a later chapter, but Cheyne's first contact with Behmenism had began much earlier in his career.

In London, Cheyne's friend, Dr James Keith was in touch with several overlapping networks of 'seekers' in England, Scotland and abroad. In particular he knew the Oxford Nonjuror, Francis Lee (1661-1719), a founder of the English Behmenist sect, the Philadelphian Society.[84] Lee's mystical interests included a scholarly concern with Biblical exegesis and Cabbalism, but he too had a medical background.[85] After resigning from his fellowship of St John's College in 1689 he studied medicine at Leyden in 1692, (where he may have heard Pitcairne lecture), and

---

81 Schwartz, Prophets, pp. 217-219.

82 Boehme's name was usually written as 'Behmen' in eighteenth-century Britain. I have chosen to use the correct spelling of his name, but refer to his British followers by the contemporary term 'Behmenists'. Principle sources used: Nils Thune, The Behmenists and the Philadelphians: a contribution to the Study of English Mysticism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Uppsala, 1948); DésiréeHirst, Hidden Riches: Traditional Symbolism from the Renaissance to Blake (1964); and Walker Decline of Hell (1974).

83 A. J. Kuhn, *Nature Spiritualized: Aspects of Anti- Newtonianism*, in English Literary History (1974), p, 405 f. Kuhn notes this, in passing, within a study of the anti-rationalist tendencies of the mystical tradition to which Cheyne's friend the non-juring theologian William Law belonged. Kuhn does not explore Cheyne's own earlier adoption of Behmenist ideas. Surprisingly, Bowles did not connect Cheyne's analogies with Boehme.

84 Keith and Lee corresponded with a mutual friend, Revd. Dr Samuel Okely (1678-1720), an Orientalist who held the Chair of Arabic at Cambridge. (BL, MS 15,911).

85 At his death, Lee was a respected biblical scholar (DNB, XVI, p. 1224). His Philadelphian activities are tactfully ignored in the biographical essay prefixed to his posthumous Dissertations, Theological, Mathematical, and Physical 2 volumes (1752), a work printed on behalf of his daughter, who also suppressed a now lost biography of her father by Dr Thomas Haywood.

graduated an M. D. at Utrecht. On returning to England in 1695 he became associated with Mrs Jane Leade (1623-1704), an English visionary, who published her 'Prophecies' in several highly poetic tracts, most notably Three Messages to the Philadelphian Society (1696-8).[86] She was a disciple of Oxford scholar, John Pordage M.D. (1607-81), the principal interpreter of Boehme's philosophy in Restoration Britain.[87] After Pordage's death, Leade assumed the leadership of the small group of spiritual seekers who had congregated around them at Hoxton Square, London.[88]

Lee subsequently lent his scholarly skills to her Behmenist publication projects (Leade went blind in 1695), and in 1696, he confirmed his involvement by marrying her daughter, in response to what he believed to be a divine command. The following year Lee, along with another Oxford 'mystic' Richard Roach (1662-1730), officially founded the Philadelphian Society. Roach was the Anglican rector of St Augustine's, Hackney from 1690 until his death in 1730, but was at the hub of a network of unorthodox religious seekers, which may have included Cheyne.[89] Lee and Roach published the Theosophical Transactions of the Philadelphian Society (March-November, 1697), and by deliberately echoing the Royal Society's Transactions in the title, this was clearly an attempt to put Behmenist theosophy forward as a scholarly corrective to the 'New Science'. Roach later gave a useful definition of 'theosophy', which helps to explain Cheyne's own shift towards a more spiritual approach to nature:

> As the Common *Philosophy* by the Faculty of Human Reason. considers Things chiefly with regard to their Second, or more immediate Causes, tho' with a General Eye to the First: *Theosophy* in a more Intellectual Way, and from a peculiar Talent or *Gift* of the Divine *Wisdom* in order thereto, has its chief Regard to the First Cause of all Things and its Act upon and Operation in and thro' both the Invisible and Visible Creation; and that both in their first Constitution, and also in the Government of them in the State they now are. It gives a more fundamental Discovery of the State of Fallen Nature both *Angelical* and *Humane,* and the Influence of God upon them in his strict Justice or Anger only, or also his Grace and Love: As also of the Deep Mystery of our Redemption by *Jesus Christ* ; the Regeneration, New birth, and Restoration to the Divine Image again: and give further and deeper Manifestation of the Nature of the Soul, the State of the Heavenly Worlds, and of the Nature of God Himself, than

---

86 DNB, XI, pp. 753-754; Walker, pp. 218-230; Thune, pp. 83-7 and 140 ff. Leade's Principal works are her effusively poetical spiritual diaries published as A Fountain of Gardens, 4 volumes, (1696-1701), and the prophetic The Enochian Walks with God (1694).

87 Pordage presented a version of Boehme's system in Theologia Mystica (1683), which carries a preface by Mrs Leade.

88 They met regularly in private homes, and established two licensed meeting houses at Hungerford Market and Westmoreland House. W. Walton, Notes and Materials for an adequate biography of William Law (1856), pp. 188-258; Thune, esp. pp. 81- 114; Hutin, pp. 81-130. Schwartz, Prophets, pp. 45ff., gives the most relevant account of the Philadelphians. Citations are limited to Schwartz unless a new source is being used.

89 His diaries, partly in cypher, in the Bodleian (which I have been unable to examine), are the main source for the activities of the 'submerged' Philadelphians after 1704.

> can be attain'd by Humane Reason and Learning. This chiefly relates to the Works of *Jacob Behmen*, who is call'd the *Teutonic. Philosopher* and by way of Emminence the *Theosopher* : but it is also applied to other Writers in the same Way.[90]

Roach and Lee were also associates of the German émigré Andreas Dionysius Freher (1649-1728), the most fascinating Behmenist scholar of this period, who left many volumes of unpublished commentaries upon Boehme's writings, which he circulated amongst a select group of adherents who met at the meeting-house in Bow Lane.[91] In the late 1690s, Freher had known Poiret in Holland, but was in London by 1699 in order to contact Leade and the Philadelphians with whom he remained loosely associated.[92] Freher's own circle of German and English adherents included the illustrator-copyist J. D. Leuchter whose magnificent 'Paradox Emblemata', and other illustrations, accompanied Freher's Behmenist commentaries.[93] Cheyne probably had close social connections with Freher's circle, and would have known these symbolic, illustrations of 'spiritual man', which deliberately echo conventional anatomical illustrations.[94]

Ramsay's Philadelphian adherences are made evident in an affectionate letter he wrote soon after his arrival at 'Isleworth', to Robert Keith (1681-1757), (subsequently the Episcopal Bishop of Edinburgh), who was a colleague of George Garden, and an associate of the Rosehearty community: 'if we continue to aspire unto our Almighty Original, we shall still be united, however far separated in this world...should it be my fortune to be tossed from Greenland to Good Hope, yet after twenty years absence our souls shall be as much united as ever, and I shall embrace you at meeting with all the freedom of a Philadelphian'.[95] Such sentimental exchanges of spiritual brotherhood suggest that those connected with Rosehearty closely identified with the

---

90 R. Roach, Imperial Standard (1728), pp. 300-301.

91 C. A. Muses, Illumination on Jacob Boehme: The Work of Dionysius Freher (New York, 1951). Freher's papers in BL.

92 Freher admonished the Philadelphians for their internal dissensions (Schwartz, Prophets, p. 51).

93 Details below in Chapter 8 f. 67.

94 Cheyne may have also been connected to Freher's Bow Lane through his friend and executor Dr John Heylyn (see Chapter 8).

95 Ramsay to R. Keith, 25 February 1709, HMC. Laing MSS (1925), pp. 156-7. In a postscript, Ramsay asks to be remembered affectionately to 'the lads about Rosehearty', and especially to Alexander Moore, the Episcopalian Minister at Fraserburgh. Keith helped Garden edit the works of Forbes of Corse. In a reply, Keith closes, 'live happy in your retirement while I continue to embrace you with the old philadelphian friendship'. Keith wrote from Invergurie, thanking Ramsay for a poem, and expresses quietist religious sentiments. He had been to Rosehearty 'where all are well'. He was later to add a note to this letter, explaining that he had become acquainted with Ramsay at Edinburgh during the previous winter (Robert Keith, History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland, ed. by J. P. Lawson for the Spottiswoode Society, Edinburgh, 1884, I, p. vii). I cannot trace the manuscript on 'mystical religion' Keith left unpublished at his death as noted in DNB, X, pp. 1214-16.

Philadelphian message. Although we do not know the precise nature of the interaction of the Philadelphians based in London and Garden's Scottish circle they had shared Continental links.[96] It remains obscure to what extent Garden's circle were directly involved with the meetings of the Philadelphian Society in London. Many of them, including Keith, Deskford, Ramsay, Pitsligo, and Cheyne, spent time in England. Keith and Ramsay at least had close affinities with both groups.

Cheyne may have long been aware of Boehme's ideas indirectly through reading the cautious responses to them in the writings of Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist.[97] Whatever formal connections existed, there is ample evidence for Behmenist interests amongst Cheyne's Scottish friends. In 1701, Cheyne and Pitcairne's admirer, the virtuoso, Colin Campbell of Ardhattan, received a long account of Poiret's criticism of mechanistic science from the Revd. Mungo Murray, the tutor to the Earl of Tullibardine's son, who was a mystically inclined associate of Garden. Here, and in a later letter of 1704, Murray explained at length how Poiret's insights into the 'Mystic Theology', of Boehme and Guyon, exposed the mathematical methods of Newtonianism to be simply the vain, misguided pursuits of a corrupt faculty of Reason. These important letters, reproduced in Appendix I, give a clear insight into the interaction of mysticism, and the Newtonian mechanical philosophy amongst Cheyne's circle at the time of his crisis. Campbell became a student of the mystics and left reading notes on Poiret and Guyon. He may have been instrumental in turning Cheyne away from mathematics to mysticism. Certainly, by 1708, Cheyne was aware of this theosophical-scientific subculture when he told Ramsay (still at Craighall), that: 'I am told my Lord Weems [sic] is so possest with a better opinion of you than you deserve that he will seriously be disobliged with Sir Thomas and you and with all the B's and P's in Brittain if he should be disappointed', a guarded reference to Ramsay's association with Bourignionists [perhaps 'Behmenists'] and

---

96 Prophets, pp. 45-55 and 85-86. Links with Behmenist-pietist groups in Germany and Holland were forged during the 1690s. Loth Fischer of Utrecht published a German translation of Leade's The Heavenly Cloud Now Breaking, (1694), and began to correspond with her. Frieherr von Knymphausen, a high-ranking administrator for Frederick III, paid Fischer a salary to sytematically translate the writings of Pordage and Leade into German and Dutch. Knymphausen had earlier patronised Bourignon (Walker, p. 221; Thune, pp. 146-50). Contemporary critics tended to equate these sects. Cheyne's correspondent, John Cockburn, includes the Philadelphians in his published attacks upon Garden: Bourignonism Detected, Narrative I (1697 or 8) pp. 14-15, and A Letter from John Cockburn D.D. to his friend in London (1698). By 1704, Roach (if not Lee), was in direct correspondence with Poiret over mystical and alchemical doctrines (Thune, p. 221; Bod., Rawlinson MSS, D/833, f. 30). Lee responded to the first of Cockburn's attacks in his State of the Philadelphian Society (1697).

97 More's mixed response to Behmenism, and other 'inner-light' enthusiasts, is discussed in Hoyles, Waning, pp. 40-41. As early as 1701 Mungo Murray was championing Poiret's 'mystical theology' in letters to Colin Campbell, see Appendix I.

Philadelphians.[98] Cunningham of Barnes probably discussed Boehme when he stayed as Cheyne's patient at Bath in the Summer of 1709, for, by the September he was writing from Fife asking Ramsay to send him the 'Abridgement of Behman's Works', and in the following year he was discussing Behmenist doctrines familiarly in his letters to Garden.[99]

By 1715 Cheyne's name was probably tainted with the charge 'theosopher' amongst the Newtonians. His failure to feature in the Royal Society's Transactions was probably the result of Newton's deliberate policy, in accord with his personal practice, of keeping revelation and philosophy separate by excluding anything theological from the journal.[100] Although Boehme's visionary insights into the nature of God, man, evil and the relationship of the spiritual and material worlds were presented in a highly metaphorical, poetic language, which left them open to a multitude of interpretations, certain central concepts emerged which came to have a seminal influence upon the dialectical nature of much German philosophy.[101] As Désirée Hirst has shown, in Britain, Boehme's hermeticism fed an occult religious tradition which continued into the eighteenth century and eventually informed Blake's spiritual philosophy. Although barely mentioned in Hirst's study, Cheyne deserves a far more prominent place in this tradition, as a Georgian interpreter who strove to keep theosophy and Newtonianism allied, and in so doing brought the ideas of a mystical enlightenment into the drawing rooms and coffee houses of Augustan England.

---

98. Cheyne to Ramsay, London, 28 October 1708. NLS, 4796.

99 NLS, 4796 and Henderson, Mystics pp. 222-9; 242. Boehme's writings were all translated into English by adherents of radical sectaries during the Interregnum, most notably by John Sparrow and John Ellistone, who published many English editions of all the works and letters between 1647 and 1662.

100 Manuel, The Religion of Isaac Newton, p. 29. This policy also effectively excluded Whiston and the Fatio (after 1706).

101 My necessarily brief accounts of Boehme's system are based upon Koyré, Hirst, Thune, and Walker (see footnote 82 above); and some reading in contempoary translations of Boehme.

# 4

# CHEYNE AND THE MYSTICAL MILLENNIUM

## Introduction: The Tradition

The underlying millenarian faith informing Cheyne's medico-religious doctrines has been completely overlooked by all his biographers until the recent work of G. S. Rousseau.[1] Whilst Rousseau bravely has to compensate for the lack of an adequate biography, I agree with Porter (EM, Intro.), that the issue of Cheyne's chiliasm remains inconclusive. No detailed attempt has been made to place Cheyne within what, as Rousseau himself suggests, is a diverse eighteenth-century tradition of scholarly and popular, quietist and enthusiastic millennialist thought. This chapter examines the evidence for Cheyne's millenarianism, and attempts to define its specific tenor as a shaping force behind his promotion of a positive doctrine of pious nervous sensibility.

Recent scholarship shows conclusively that millenarianism, a subject of much concern to historians of the seventeenth century, was far from dead amongst both orthodox and heterodox scholars and churchmen in the following century.[2] Examining the religious beliefs of Cheyne and many of his associates, forces us into agreement with Richard Popkin's suggestion that we must view 'the eighteenth century as both an age of reason and an age of revelation'.[3] We should bear in mind W. H. Oliver's comment that 'Prophetical theology was...for centuries a normal exegetical activity, a concern of professional scholars and a respectable way of saying things about God, man and their relationship in society and history'.[4] Indeed, as J. Harrison notes 'millenarianism is in fact merely an extreme form of one aspect of

---

[1] Rousseau, *IDC*, pp. 81-126. Whilst much is said of the profusion of millenarian cults active in Britain at the time of his breakdown, Rousseau neglects Cheyne's published comments, and does not indicate that, beyond a few common-place remarks on the non-eternal nature of creation in the PP (1705, unaltered in 1715), Cheyne made no overt millennialist statements in print until 1740 (ER, Part II).

[2] For the history of specific sects, the works of Thune, Hirst, Walker, M. C. Jacob already cited, and P. J. Korshin Typologies in England 1650-1820 (Princeton, 1982), (esp., Chs., 1, 2 and 9). Broader comments by R. H. Popkin in his introductions to Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and E. M. Force, William Whiston. Studies dealing with the later period have also proved useful: W. H. Oliver, The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s (OUP, 1978), esp. Ch. 2, and J. F. C. Harrison, The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780-1850 (1979), esp., Ch. 1.

[3] Popkin, Millenarianism and Messianism (1988), introduction p. 4. No existing study does justice to the topic in this period, although the pioneering work of Schwartz suggests the need for such a history.

[4] Oliver, p. 13.

orthodox Christian faith, since all Christians are committed in some way to the doctrine of Christ's second coming, despite the varied interpretations given to the Prophetical Books of the Bible, especially Daniel and Revelation'.[5]

Space forbids a full analysis of the various strategies employed by millennialist interpreters, but to understand Cheyne's thinking, it is useful to note one very basic (though far from rigid), polarity within what Harrison terms 'a continuum of belief' between radical and conservative millenarian thinkers. Revelation suggests that Christ will reign on earth for a thousand years before the final judgement, and that during this millennial period, the Anti-Christ and his minions will be overcome by the Saints, who will join Christ on earth. Interpreters have traditionally been divided between those who believe that the Second Coming of Christ will precede the millennium and those who think that the final thousand year struggle between the forces of good and evil is merely a preparatory period before Christ's final advent. The former, cataclysmic vision lent itself to a more radical, revolutionary ethos emphasising direct spiritual revelation and the literal interpretation of Scripture and contemporary 'signs'. This judgemental, Apocalyptic ethos, contrasts with the latter vision of a gradual process of millenarian fulfilment, achieved through human instrumentality and the eventual perfection of the world as it stands. This ameliorative conception of the millennium as a Utopian development of the existing order, sat comfortably with a more conservative political stance, and accorded with an optimistic Augustan vision of gradual enlightenment as providence became integrated into natural law.[6] Within these broad divisions, a further distinction may be made between a (usually post-millennialist), belief that the 'latter days' has already begun, and a mere sense of its immanence. It will be argued, that although Cheyne was familiar with the advocates of both extremes of the tradition, with what Harrison describes as 'the intellectually sophisticated millennialists' and 'popular, largely self-educated, Adventist millenarians', his quietism places him within a specifically conservative, gradualist, post-millennialist tradition; a tradition which clarifies the religious significance of Cheyne's pre-occupation with nervous sensibility.

As a theologically orientated undergraduate, Cheyne probably knew the recent studies of Revelation by John Foxe, J. H. Alsted and Thomas Brightman. At Aberdeen he would have encountered the innovatory scholarly methods introduced by Joseph Mede in his Clavis Apocalyptica (1644), and through that of his pupils, Henry More, John Milton, Samuel Hartlib, John Dury, and William Twisse. They in

---

[5] Harrison, pp. 3-4.

[6] Harrison, p. 5-6 and E. Tuveson, Millennium and Utopia: a study in the Background of the Idea of Progress (N.Y., 1964), esp. pp. 139-40.

turn influenced the exegetical concerns of early members of the Royal Society such as Boyle, Wilkins, Oldenburg, and the Latitudinarian Bishops.[7] For these latter the advance of the new science was itself an integral part of millennial fulfilment. Through Pitcairne and Gregory, Cheyne arrived in London aware of Newton's studies in Prophetic exegesis and Biblical Chronology.[8] Even closer to Cheyne we have the millennialist calculations of his collaborator John Craige, mentioned in Chapter 2. Such concerns were an accepted pursuit for a Christian virtuosi.

Millennialist belief was also widely accepted amongst orthodox churchmen in the reign of Queen Anne.[9] By 1705, Cheyne was also familiar with the work of Newton's protégé William Whiston, whose prophetical interests owed much to Bishop William Lloyd, who advised Anne on foreign policy in accordance with millenarian interpretations of contemporary political events.[10] There is no evidence of any personal contact between Whiston and Cheyne, but Lloyd was possibly his patient.[11] In 1705, when Cheyne addressed the 'world-maker' controversy generated by Thomas Burnet (taken up in the 1690s by first Whiston and then John Keill), he revealed his interest in this debate, regarding the workings of divine providence, which engaged Newton and his pupils, as they sought to reconcile Mosaic history with recent developments in the natural sciences. Does God remain actively in control of his creation? Does he act through existing second causes, or natural laws, or could he still choose to interrupt these laws (as in the working of miracles or acts of personal revelation), in order to further the millennium ?[12] Margaret Jacob asserts in her study of this widespread interest in Biblical Prophecy amongst clergymen and Newtonian scientists (often synonymous), that the millenarian expectations of so many orthodox Anglicans had little to do with the kind of apocalyptic upheavals of the social

---

7 Jacob , Newtonians passim. Cheyne probably knew the Apocalyptic writings of his fellow Scots, John Napier of Merchistoun and Robert Fleming the younger. By 1705 he had read More, Wilkins, and Boyle.

8 The cautious Newton's exegetical studies only appeared in print with the posthumous publication of one uncontroversial essay, the Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St John (1733), not mentioned by Cheyne. Newton discussed the interpretation of Revelation with Henry More, Fatio, Locke and Whiston (F. E. Manuel, The Religion of Isaac Newton, passim).

9 Jacob , Newtonians, Ch. 3.

10 Hiscock, p. 16; Schwartz, Prophets, pp. 114-115. Bulkeley also knew Lloyd.

11 Whilst giving a prescription to Samuel Richardson in 1740, Cheyne cited Lloyd's longevity and wisdom as proof of its effectiveness: 'I assure you I took it myself some Months, and Lloyd, Bishop of Worcester, the Prophet as he was called, took it twice a Year for two Months till 90, and none studied or sat more than he' (Mullett, Letters p. 63).

12 David Kubrin *Providence and the Newtonian Philosophy: the Creation and Dissolution of the World in Newtonian Thought* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cornell University, 1968), and J. E. Mc.Quire and P. M. Rattansi, *Newton and the Pipes of Pan*, Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, 21 (1968), pp. 108-43.

hierarchy that had been optimistically proclaimed by radical sects of the previous century.[13] Similarly Hillel Schwartz argues that, 'the Millennialism of the later Stuart era most often conveyed a socially and politically moderate eschatology. Millenarian clergymen were anxious for a reasonable stability and toleration within the church'.[14]

G. S. Rousseau's project, to give a developmental account of Cheyne's millenialist position, is hindered by the Doctor's extreme caution about publishing any unorthodox theological ideas which he may have privately endorsed. Most of what we know of his private studies derives from correspondence relating to the last decade of his life, when as Rousseau notes, this public reticence abated somewhat and he published his unorthodox 'Philosophical Discourses', as Part Two of An Essay on Regimen (1740) (discussed in Chapter 9 below). Some of these essays were written immediately before their publication, whilst others had been lying around for some time, but there is no reason to question Cheyne's own statement in the preface that 'I can honestly affirm, I have had one uniform manner of thinking in Philosophy, Physic, and Divinity, in the main, ever since my Thoughts were fix'd and my Principle establish'd' (p. xiv). Of course this begs the question of exactly when, after his initial crisis, Cheyne became fixed in his new principles. Upon his own admittance he experienced, 'alternatives of greater Light and Darkness occasionally and transiently, according to the State of my Spirits, Knowledge, and Experience', but he insists that 'in the Heart of my Soul (so to speak), I have been uniform, and under the same Convictions, as to the Fundamentals of these Sciences' (Ibid..). In considering Cheyne's millenarian statements of 1740, we must remain aware that they represent the mature conclusions of a man who went through repeated rounds of hope and despair regarding the means, likelihood and immanence of his own and humanity's ultimate salvation.

Rousseau speculates upon the possibility that Cheyne may have accepted Whiston's precise predictions that the millennium would begin in 1736, (shared by Lloyd and Pierre Allix), or Richard Roach's similar pronouncements in the late 1720s, but Cheyne is never found subscribing to this type of precise chronological prediction. What little evidence we have, shows him always critical of such intellectual and spiritual pride which attempts to 'know the ways of God', and the

---

13 Jacob cites the millenarian concerns of Bishop Lloyd, Bishop Sancroft, John Evelyn, Robert Fleming, and Thomas Burnet. See Force for qualifications of Jacobs.

14 Schwartz, Prophets: the History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-Century England, (1980), p. 39. Jacob , Newtonians, Chapter 3.

'Designs of the Sovereign Reason' concerning our probationary time on earth.[15] But Cheyne *did* believe in an active God and his breakdown *does* appear to have confirmed his belief in personal revelation. In this context, as a part of his account of the social roots of Cheyne's 'medico-millenarianism', Rousseau makes much of the fact that Cheyne's initial breakdown coincided with the arrival in Britain of the Camisard Prophets, a group of exiled French Protestant *inspirés* who made British converts to their visionary doctrines of imminent millennialist fulfilment. The following thorough re-examination of Cheyne's contact with this sect forms an essential part of the present project to offer a more detailed description of the precise nature of Cheyne's millennialist concerns. It is followed by a conclusive section which redefines Cheyne's brand of millenarianism, and how this relates to his concern with sensibility.

**Prophets of the Millennium**

The French Prophets were led by a number of exiled Huguenots, from the Cevennes region, who developed an Apocalyptic millenarianism under the pressure of persecution after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.[16] Before their arrival, Cheyne, with his close social connections to sects in Holland, may well have been familiar with the exegetical writings of Pierre Jurieu, whose blatant identification of the Anti-Christ with the French King was to lend scholarly authority to the supposedly 'inspired' activities of the persecuted Camisards.[17] Durand Fage, Elie Marion and Jean Cavalier, the three Prophets who began their mission to Britain in 1706, were all veterans of the Camisard Revolt prompted by the War of the Spanish Succession in 1702. Their published 'Warnings' are saturated with the imagery of Revelation and Daniel, as employed in Jurieu's Apocalyptic writings. Claims to gifts of prophecy (itself a sign of the 'latter days'), and miraculous acts of healing formed a significant part of their supposedly 'Divine Dispensation'. Prophets and their converts went into trances, frequently accompanied by violent bodily agitations and other

---

15 ER, p. 41. The nearest he comes to a Newtonian-Whistonian type of predictive stance was in 1740 when he noted the common-place exegetical formula that ' a thousand days on earth are but as a day' to God (Ibid., p. 26; 33).

16 Schwartz, Prophets; this definitive account is supplemented by Schwartz, Knaves, Fools, Madmen, and the 'Subtile Effluvium': a study of the Opposition to the French Prophets in England, 1706-1710., (Gainesville, 1978); Jacobs, Newtonians, pp. 251-270. Jacob 's thesis that the opposition stemmed from an alliance of Newtonians and Latitudinarians appears simplistic after the excellent research of Schwartz.

17 Jurieu's Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies, appeared in English in 1687 and is discussed in Schwartz, Prophets, pp. 15-16; 170- 71.

aberrant, ecstatic, irrational behaviour such as spontaneous singing or public nudity, which were thought to accompany direct possession by the Holy Spirit. Women and unlettered children were particularly favoured with the gift of inspiration through which the 'Divine Light' revealed judgemental warnings of the impending Second Coming. These messages, accepted as the direct 'Word of God', were taken down by official secretaries and published in a large number of pamphlets which record their activities throughout Britain from late 1706 onwards.[18]

Cheyne would have soon become aware of their activities. Although a small sect, the very public, socially disruptive nature of their mission aroused much publicity and debate amongst laymen, churchmen and scholars, some of whom were castigated directly by the Prophets for their scepticism. Shaftesbury's Letter Concerning Enthusiasm (1708), is probably the best known response, but Schwartz calculates that nearly a hundred pamphlets, broadsides, essays, poems and plays were prompted by their activities.[19] Although Swift is surprisingly absent from this list, his *Mechanical Operations of the Spirit* (1704), exploits the medico-religious conceptual vocabulary which informed the ensuing debate on the nature of religious inspiration. Orthodox opinion dismissed the Prophets as either deliberate impostors, deluded, or diseased. Although a few, older opponents discussed their actions in terms of satanic possession, most scholarly critics explained their bizarre behaviour in physiological terms, as a 'disease' resulting from the disruption of the normal mind-body relationship. Some critics employed an ill-defined humoral or mechanistic medical terminology identical with that being used by Keith and Cheyne in their warnings to Ramsay of 1708-9. By then the disturbing activities of the French Prophets had alerted many to the fine line between genuine religious zeal and mental and physical disorder. Bourignon's similar claims to visionary insight were as vulnerable to such critical analysis as the prophetical activities of the Camisards. Indeed, the Scottish Bourignists and their Philadelphian associates were the most prominent of a number of established British pietist sects, from which the Camisards drew converts.[20] This success largely depended upon the fact that several of these native groups already embraced strong millenarian hopes which the Prophets merely served to confirm. Significantly, these converts included some of Cheyne's 'spiritual' friends and one notable Newtonian colleague.

From the outset, the civil and ecclesiastical establishment critically identified the Apocalyptic brand of millenarianism espoused by the Camisards with earlier,

---

18 Ibid., pp. 11-36, and Knaves pp. 5-13; Jacob , Newtonians pp. 251-270.

19 Schwartz, Knaves pp. 85-93 (bibliography).

20 Schwartz, Prophets, Ch. II, 'The English Setting', pp. 37- 71.

politically radical outbreaks of 'enthusiasm'. Cheyne's Newtonian colleagues, with their scholarly interest in Revelation were curious but ultimately they recoiled from the unruly, populist activities of the Prophets. Their public displays, including symbolic fights and outbreaks of uncontrolled laughter, smacked too much of the theatre, a prime target for the many contemporary Christians engaged in the burgeoning 'Reforming Societies'.[21] Sympathetic as many British Protestants were with the sufferings of their French counterparts, most could not countenance the anarchic antics of the Prophets, whose bizarre posturings suggested a complete overthrow of the normal balanced relationship between body and mind. Obvious political analogies were drawn from this medico-philosophical analysis concerning the breakdown of social hierarchies. Bishop Lloyd was typical of many scholars who retracted earlier prophetical statements that might be interpreted as anti-monarchical.[22] Although by 1709 Whiston was prepared to uphold Arianism, in 1707 he met with the Prophets to try and dissuade them, and he also warned against false, modern Prophets in the last of his Boyle Lectures on Scripture Politicks, delivered in November of that year.[23]

Attention was aroused amongst Newton's circle when their colleague, the London-domiciled, Swiss Mathematician, Nicholas Fatio de Duillier (with whom Bernoulli was later to compare Cheyne), became an early convert.[24] A close friend of Newton, Fatio was a respected member of England's scientific community who made significant contributions to the Royal Society's Transactions, with papers on the Calculus and gravitation.[25] Cheyne must have shared in the intense curiosity of this circle when, within a month of the arrival of the Camisards in London, Fatio became closely involved with the sect, acting as their official secretary. By June 1707 he had declared himself an inspired convert, and was to remain one for the rest of his long

---

21 Ibid., pp. 251-257. Cheyne shared the low opinion of the moral value of the public theatre expressed by his friend the Behmenist-theologian William Law in The Unlawfulness of Stage Entertainment (1723).

22 Jacobs, Newtonians, p. 127.

23 As the Prophets came under the influence of politically conservative British converts they disassociated themselves from their champion, Sir Richard Bulkeley, because of his friendship with the 'leveller' Abraham Whitrow (Prophets, pp. 130-132).

24 C. A. Domson, *Nicholas Fatio de Duillier and the Prophets of London: An Essay in the Historical Interaction of Natural Philosophy and Millennial Belief in the Age of Newton*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, (Yale, 1972). The only account of Fatio to show the close relationship between his scientific and religious concerns. Curiously, in 1691-2, Fatio experienced a physical and mental crisis which appears to have resembled Cheyne's later breakdown. Newton played an important role in nursing Fatio back to health and religion, fostering his interest in the interpretation of Scriptural prophecies. (Domson, pp. 35-66).

25 Cheyne, who addresses himself to problems posed by Fatio in his own work on calculus, would have met him through mutual associates such as Gregory, Keill or Halley.

life. David Gregory met some of the Prophets in Fatio's company on 26 October 1706, noting down their prediction that the French King would soon be defeated.[26] In later years, Cheyne's friend, Chevalier Ramsay recalled this contemporary interest in the Prophets, remarking that 'Sir Isaac himself had strong inclination to go and hear these prophets, and was retained from it with difficulty by some of his friends who feared he might be infected by them as Faccio [Fatio] had been'.[27] Newton left no comment on the Prophets, although he seems to have remained friendly with Fatio, even after December 1707, when Fatio, along with the Camisard leaders Jean Dande and Elie Marion, appeared on the scaffold for public blasphemy. However, the newly knighted Newton, eager to keep his social standing, kept his distance from such 'enthusiasm'.[28]

Ramsay also attended several meetings of the Prophets at London in 1706-7. This is unsurprising since, as he later told Spence, he 'was then at London, learning mathematics under Faccio (whom he called one of the best mathematicians in Europe), and by his desire went two or three times with him to hear them. He thought all their agitations the effect of a heavenly inspiration, and actually caught them of them himself'.[29] Initially Ramsay remained open-minded, but eventually he rejected the Prophets as dangerously deluded, because their often hysterical meetings only served to distract him from the spiritual exercise of quietist 'recollection' or 'silent prayer' which, as we have seen from Cheyne's exchanges with him three years later, was a fundamental part of his introverted 'mystical' observances. Already, by 1709, Ramsay was openly hostile to the Prophets and in 1729 he argued, as a convert to Rome, that the similarity between the 'epileptic disorders' (prevalent amongst the French), and truly divine inspiration had simply been exploited by the Camisards to pursue a religious war.[30]

---

[26] Royal Society, Gregory MS 247, f.63. Jacobs, Newtonians, p. 256. Gregory's cynicism is revealed in a letter to Dr Charlett, prompted by the failed predicted resurrection of the convert Dr Emes at Bunhill Fields in May 1708: 'the Camisars are quite confounded' (2/6/1708, Bod., Ballard MS, 24/f.52.).

[27] Spence, Anecdotes, p.462-3. Francis Lockier, told Spence that "Tis not at all improbable that Sir Isaac Newton, though so great a man, might have had a hankering after the French Prophets', because of his interest in 'the old fooleries', astrology and alchemy (Ibid, p. 283).

[28] Schwartz, Prophets, pp. 110-112.

[29] Ibid. p. 462. Cheyne probably played a part in Ramsay approaching Fatio for lessons: Fatio was teaching mathematics at Spitalfields in 1705 (Domson, p. 83). Ramsay went to London in the winter of 1708-9 to work for Wemyss, and Henderson assumes that it was at this time that Ramsay took lessons from Fatio, but Cheyne's remark in a letter 5 June, 1708 that 'it was like your & my wisdom to part without a particular direction for you', reveals that Ramsay was also in London before November 1708. Ramsay probably first encountered the Prophets at London with Fatio in 1706-7.

[30] Spence, Anecdotes, p. 463.

It can be safely assumed that Cheyne attended an early London or West-Country meeting of the Prophets, perhaps accompanied by Fatio, Gregory or other members of the Newton circle, or with Ramsay, Keith and their Philadelphian associates. With Cheyne's continued interest in the hypothesis that a rarefied fluid or aether formed the medium between matter and spirit, he would have been intrigued by Fatio's claim, later reported by Ramsay, that he had found the answer to the cause of attraction (aetherial fluid), by divine inspiration at a meeting of the Prophets.[31] Cheyne's flirtation with the notion of the aether may have been abandoned when he considered the broader implications of Fatio's more 'enthusiastic' claims for the concept. Bernoulli's anecdotal comparison (in 1713), between Cheyne's rumoured adherences to a 'visionary sect or other' with Fatio's conversion to the Prophets, reflects the fact that Cheyne did have close social connections with both the curious and the converted. Rousseau goes so far as to state that 'whereas Gregory was resistant, Cheyne was sympathetic', adding bemusedly, 'precisely why he did not join Fatio and the other Prophets remains a mystery'.[32] Certainly there is no evidence that Cheyne ever joined the Prophets.[33] Initially he may have been sympathetic, but Cheyne's subsequent medico-religious doctrines repudiate the type of ecstatic, hysteric behaviour which the Prophets promoted as divine inspiration.

---

31 Ramsay added that 'however this happened, 'tis the very thing that Sir Isaac Newton has since shown'. We do not know what personal contact Cheyne had with Fatio around 1706-7. Fatio's name often appears next to Cheyne's in Gregory's memoranda for this period, but the only hard evidence for them having direct contact dates, surprisingly, from May 1735, when Cheyne added his signature at Bath, to those of Leibniz (1694), Bernoulli (1701), Newton (1690), and Huygens (1691), to a manuscript paper of Fatio's on gravitational attraction, printed in M. Bernard Gagnebin, *De La Cause De La Pesantur*, Notes and Records of the Royal Society, VI, (1949), pp. 105-160; esp. p. 118 and p. 123. It was perhaps at this time that Fatio also discussed Newtonianism with Cheyne's brother-in-law, Dr Charles Middleton, whose close friend (and Cheyne's translator), Dr John Robertson, wrote this tantalising note to the geologist A. S. Catcott on 10 October 1754 regarding the sale catalogue of Dr Mead's library: 'No. 303 of the 4$^{o}$ would be worth having, to confirm or confute wht. Dr Middleton told us Facio said of his assisting Sr. Isaac. But some Newtonian will surely have it' (Bristol Central Library, MS B26063). Robertson writes as a Hutchinsonian.

32 Rousseau, *IDC*, p. 94; 96. Rousseau also states that 'by 1709, however Cheyne had befriended a number of the Prophet's leaders, especially Cunningham and Roach' (f.49). From my knowledge of the evidence, this is misleading. although by this date he probably knew Fatio in some capacity. His relations with Roach are obscure and I can trace no evidence of Cheyne's approval for Cunningham's behaviour after his conversion to the Prophets at Edinburgh in July 1709 (further details in next Chapter).

33 Dr Schwartz, who a few years ago meticulously researched the extant records of the Prophets in Britain and on the Continent, tells me he has no recollection of Cheyne ever being named as a member. Fatio made lists of the converts. I examined a copy of the most substantial, (Bibliothèque de Genève, MS 605/7, cahier II, ff. 7- 8, kindly supplied by the librarian), before contacting Dr Schwartz, who agrees with my suggestion that Bernoulli's association of Cheyne's 'visionary sect' with Fatio and the Camisards probably stemmed from the fact that Cheyne attended a meeting of the sect out of curiosity.

Cheyne's negative response to the Prophets was strongly influenced by his 'Spiritual Friends', especially Andrew Ramsay, who became increasingly concerned to dissuade quietists from joining.[34] The Philadelphians had ceased public activity soon after Leade's death in 1704. The meetings Ramsay attended with Fatio were probably the first public ones the Prophets held in late 1706 and the summer of 1707 in a London meeting-house, where they were joined by Roach and his companion, the prophetess Sarah Wiltshire.[35] Roach's attempt to assimilate the submerged Philadelphians with the Camisards merely exacerbated existing divisions, as similar joint-meetings were soon to do in 1709 amongst their Scottish Bourignonist associates.[36] The Philadelphian message had always been blatantly millenarian, yet, despite their descent from 'leveller' Pordage, in 1697, Lee was insisting that they were 'not for *turning the World Upside Down'* , 'nor are they 'Enemies to the Civil or Ecclesiastical Rights of Any'.[37] By 1706, they were not egalitarian radicals but conservative Anglican reformers and Leade's optimistic, gradualist vision of a 'Spiritual Third Age' of Universal Salvation was antithetical to the more Apocalyptic, judgemental, cataclysmic ethos of the Camisards.[38]

---

34 Rousseau suggests that Cheyne was influenced by Whiston's public repudiation of the Prophets in 1707, but Cheyne's Episcopalian leanings probably made him as critical of Whiston's Whiggish 'Scripture Politicks', as he was regarding the nervous antics of the Prophets. Cheyne's 'mystic' mentor, Lord Pitsligo attacked Whiston's ideas in an unpublished paper (NLS, 4976). Cheyne himself condemned Arianism in print (ER, p. 186-7). Although the young Alexander Pope was moved by Whiston's millenarian physico-theological rhapsodising when he attended one of his coffee-house lectures in 1711, as a whole the Tory wits, with whom Cheyne associated, attacked Whiston as an anti-trinitarian.

35 Schwartz, Prophets, pp. 85- 6; Walker, pp. 256-7.

36 He later published two theosophical-millenarian tracts: The Great Crisis, or the Mystery of the Times and Seasons Unfolded (1725, appeared 1727), and The Imperial Standard of Messiah Triumphant Coming Now in the Power and Kingdom of his Father with His Saints on Earth (1728) These may (as Rousseau asserts), have influenced Cheyne, when he was suffering a second major 'crisis' of health.

37 Lee, as *Philadelphus*, The State of the Philadelphian Society: or the grounds of their proceedings consider'd in answer to a Letter from Philalethes, upon occasion of the Theosophical Transactions (1697) (pp. 7-9); Leade, The Signs of the Times: forerunning the Kingdom of Christ, and evidencing when it is to come (1699). The sect's name was derived from one of the 'seven churches of Asia', to whom St John the Divine addressed his prophecy in the Book of Revelation. It reflected their belief that they represented a persecuted but faithful remnant of the true faith; one that would remain unshaken in the turbulent times immediately preceeding the Second Coming of Christ. They felt united by 'Brotherly Love' (as the name 'Philadelphia' suggests), and like the Quakers, adopted a patient, resigned attitude, waiting for the Spirit to descend. Lee describes the sect as a 'Religious Society for the Reformation of Manners, for the Advancement of an Heroical Christian piety, and Universal Love Towards All' in phrases that deliberately echo the declared aims of more orthodox contemporary groups, concerned with Christian renewal (For Pordage and Familists-Ranters see Hill, World Turned, pp. 224-226).

38 Leade's millenarianism was a late flowering of the heretical interpretations of Revelation and Daniel traceable to Joachim of Fiore, who held to a mystic notion of a 'Third Age of the Spirit' superior to the 'Second Age of the Son' (Oliver, p. 28-30). Roach was suspicious of the Camisards but felt they were

The final public appearances of the Philadelphians in 1706-7 damaged their reputation. Lee disassociated himself from those who choose to 'agitate' with the Camisards and repudiated religious enthusiasm in *The History of Montanism* (1710), an account of the heretic Montanus.[39] Nonetheless, according to Schwartz, at least ten members of the original Philadelphian Society became converts.[40] Through his intimacy with Dr Keith and Ramsay, Cheyne would have known of at least one, William Freke (1662-1744), an astrologer, grammarian, and Behmenist student of Pordage, who denounced his former Arianism and proclaimed himself a Prophet in 1709, with the publication of his millenarian tract The Great Elijah's Ist Appearance.[41] This social proximity to Camisard activity served to focus Cheyne's ideas concerning the relationship between the soul (or spirit) and the body, between inspiration and insanity. The influence of the sect was felt for some years amongst British pietists, particularly in the Bath-Bristol area where Cheyne settled. But interest in the Prophets reached a critical stage amongst Cheyne's closest friends when a small missionary group arrived in Edinburgh in the summer of 1709, and began making converts amongst the Scottish quietists. One of these was Cheyne's patient, Andrew Cunningham of Barnes.

## The Case of Andrew Cunningham

---

certainly a sign of the millen ium (Thune, pp. 246-9). He symbolically envisaged the clash with the Philadelphians as a spiritual battle between 'Sophia', the Behmenist spirit of wisdom and love, and a judgemental spirit favoured by the Prophets.

39 Walton Notes and Materials pp. 188-258; Thune, pp. 143-6 (Lee's motivations for abandoning the group), and Schwartz, Prophets, p. 50. He made a further declaration of a 'Polemico Sacro-Prophetica' or marriage of Philadelphians and Camisards on 4 June, 1710 (Prophets, p. 142). Part II of the 4th, edition of The Spirit of Enthusiasm Exorcised (1709), by Lee's colleague the non-juror George Hickes (1642-1715). Hickes issued this in direct response to the alarming activities of the French Prophets whose judgemental mission to England began in the autumn of 1706 (of whom more below). Another addition, 'The New Pretenders To Prophecy Examin'd and their Pretences Shewn to be Groundless and False', penned by their colleague Nathaniel Spinkes (1683-1727), formed the pointed conclusion to this three-part High-Church condemnation of 'Enthusiasts'. Lee's more orthodox Oxford friends took The History of Montanism to be a retraction of his ill-advised involvement with the Philadelphians. It seems to represent Lee's recoil from Roach's attempt to equate the Philadelphian's Universalist message with the more judgemental 'warnings' of the Camisards.

40 Schwartz, Prophets, p. 86.

41 His New Jerusalem Vision Interpreted (1701-2?) (untraced), suggests millenarian interests before he joined the Prophets. By 1715-16 Keith was writing cryptically to Lord Oxford that 'there are but few of Mr. Freke's disengaged spirit left in the world' (BL, Landsdowne MSS 15911/ff. 1, 30 and 33; 23204/ff. 20, 26 and 39) (this may have had a political rather than religious implication). William Freke was involved in paying Ockley, Prof. of Arabic at Oxford, to translate ancient Cabbalist texts (DNB, vii, pp. 687-8).

Andrew Cunningham was a scholarly member of the minor Fife gentry who shared an interest in 'inward' Christianity with George Garden's circle. He had previously been a patient of Cheyne's when, in the early summer of 1709, he travelled from Scotland to Bath to seek relief from a protracted period of ill-health. [42] Over the summer the intimacy between Cunningham and Cheyne deepened. The physician, by now deeply engaged upon the study of primitive and mystical Christianity, thought highly of his patient's spiritual insights, telling Ramsay: 'He is a worthy valuable person & whom I am (the more I know him) the more strongly united to him in Heart & mind. He has bin a Great Comfort to me & I am answerable for the example he set me, & the edification I receiv'd in his conversation. I hope I Love only my makers image in him which indeed grows more pure & bright dayly'. [43] At Bath, Cunningham was writing to Ramsay in London, requesting him to obtain and forward books by Origen, Gregory Nyssa, St Basil, St Ignatius and Cassian (on asceticism), William Cave's Historia Literaria (1682), (a definitive account of the Church Fathers), Poiret's Theologia Mystica and the mediaeval mystic, Walter Hilton's Scale of Perfection (written c. 1394).[44] Although Cheyne humbles himself before Cunningham, this and subsequent lists partly reflect his own recommendations, for by this date he had already accumulated a distinctive library of philosophical and religious works.[45]

The language of Cunningham's letters reflect his immersion in quietist doctrines. When he arrived at Bath, he was already curious about the Prophets, a small contingent of whom had visited Edinburgh that Spring.[46] He undoubtedly discussed the matter with Cheyne, under whose care he soon began to feel that he had 'recover'd to a miracle' and he scarcely knew himself 'to be the same man I was some weeks ago, and I as visibly now regain Flesh, Spirits, Strength, and Stomach'. He was convinced that he must 'adore and acknowledge a very particular Conduct of

---

42 Virtually all we know of Cunningham's background is contained in Henderson, Mystics, pp. 191-198. This section was already drafted before I had read G. S. Rousseau's brief account of Cunningham's influence upon Cheyne's religious 'crisis' (*IDC*, pp. 97-8). Whilst I agree with his basic thesis that this was an important friendship, my interpretation of the evidence differs significantly on several points.

43 Cheyne to Ramsay, Bath, 1 June 1709, NLS, 4796 (internal evidence suggests misdated for 1 July).

44 Cunningham and Cheyne to Ramsay, Bath 18 June, 1709 and Cunningham to Ramsay 29 June, 1709, NLS, 4796.

45 An earlier batch of books sent by Cheyne to Scotland in the Spring (including, amongst other items Ephren's Cyrus), went astray. A month later, Cunningham made further orders to which Cheyne added a postscript explaining that his London landlord has written to him concerning Ramsay borrowing books from his library. Cheyne was happy to allow this favour, but a note was to be left of what had been taken. His letters are addressed to 'the Old Man's Coffee House, Charing Cross" or 'The Plough Ball, St Martin's Street Coffee House by Leister [sic] Fields'. Dr Keith lived nearby in fashionable Gloucester St., Holborn (Mystics, p. 59).

46 Anon, An Account of the Pretended Prophets, newly come from England etc (Edinburgh ? 1709); MS diary of meetings in Lowlands, 1709, NLS, Acc. 8592; and Mitchell Library, Slains MS 562590.

Providence' which had brought this about: 'I'm persuaded that this new lease of life is given me for some particular End and I can't hinder myself after to beg of my bless'd Redeemer to let me know it and expect all of my best friends will join with me in this Petition. I desire henceforth to be a Child of Providence to live no longer but to God'.[47] The providential interpretation Cunningham put upon his recovery was to some degree confirmed by his physician. Cheyne believed in the possibility of God's active-providence. He was himself going through a similar process of spiritual reappraisal after recovering from a serious illness. However, in the light of subsequent events, it should be noted that Cheyne had misgivings about the permanence of Cunningham's recovery. He did not share in his patient's enthusiastic belief that he was the subject of a miracle, and wrote to Ramsay on 30 June, the day after Cunningham left to return north, to report that Barnes was 'in as Good a state of Health as he was in Last Autumn. I am only afraid of the next Spring' [48]

In retrospect, Cheyne probably prided himself upon his professional perspicuity, because some months after returning to Scotland, Cunningham was to decide that the providential path God had marked out for him to follow with his new-found strength of body and spirit was that of a Prophet. He became the Camisard's chief Scottish convert and for the next six years, organised and publicised their missionary activities in Britain and on the Continent.[49] Whilst this 'conversion' certainly owed something to the sudden recovery of his health, it was later events in Edinburgh which actually convinced him that the Prophets were truly possessed with the Holy Spirit.[50] When Cunningham returned to Edinburgh in July, he felt that a second visit of the Prophets in June had brought spiritual enlightenment to some of his quietist friends, some of whom had begun to 'agitate'. Pitsligo, his sister Jean, Lord Deskford and a nephew of George Garden, were amongst the sympathetically curious. In September a sceptical Sir Thomas Hope, who had earlier been the subject of an act of healing, visited Edinburgh with Cunningham and Pitsligo 'some others of our noble acquaintance' who were 'admitted into the most private meetings which the prophetesses have had, where indeed there are things worth learning, but still stumbling in their predictions,

---

47 Cunningham to Ramsay, 21 May, 1709, Bath, NLS, 4796.

48 NLS 4796.

49 Cunningham-Dutton letters (1709-1715) Slains, 562590; Cunnningham's own account of his conversion to the Prophets in correspondence with Ramsay (NLS 4976); the series of long letters he exchanged with George Garden, from whom he sought spiritual advice in Mystics, pp. 199-262; Schwartz, The Prophets, pp. 156-169, for impact of Scottish quietism upon the Camisards.

50 On his return journey to Scotland in July 1709, Cunningham read the quietist text, Sancta Sophia or Directions for the Prayer of Contemplation (Douay, 1657), a compilation of the writings of Augustinian Baker (1575-1641), a reclusive, ascetic, Welsh Benedictine. Significantly, Baker's conversion was after a quick recovery from a riding accident (DNB, I, pp. 922-925).

and their pretensions never in the least abating'.[51] By November 1709, James Lundie at Leyden was writing to Ramsay of 'the melancholy accounts of some of our friends in Scotland...that there is not a person in or about Edinburgh that read the writings of A[ntonia] B[ourignon] but what are more or less under agitations except my brother and Barnes'.[52] This proved to be ironic exaggeration. Amongst the Scottish converts, Cunningham was soon to be the most prominent.

Cunningham had remained undecided regarding the authenticity of the prophecies, but at a subsequent meeting the spirit spoke of his recent resolve to use a special quietist technique of 'silent prayer' (derived from Baker), a practice (as he later told Garden), of which he had spoken to virtually no-one:

> After some other things I was commanded in obedience to my Heavenly Father to go to Couper the 14th of Octor. where he would speak by the mouth of that young vassel, that is, the lady Abden's child, and afterwards there was a promise in answer to a resolution and desire I have offer'd up to God now these two years, but never told any mortal of it but Dr Cheyne.[53]

This prophetic revelation of a secret between himself and his physician finally sealed his conversion. The fact that by November 1709, Lady Abden had confessed that she had been deluded to (amongst others), Cheyne's future father-in-law, the Edinburgh Nonjuror Patrick Middleton, does not appear to have weakened Cunningham's faith.[54]

Ramsay's correspondence of 1708-9 reveals his own outright hostility to the Prophets and the equally disturbed and sceptical responses of Garden, Lundie, Dr Keith and other Scottish quietists, who all tried to dissuade Cunningham that the Prophets were deluded by false spirits or physical illness. Regrettably we do not have the reaction of Cheyne, who must have soon heard of the supposedly supernatural revelation of a secret between himself and his patient. Evidence of a definite lull in Cheyne's correspondence with Cunningham immediately after his conversion may reflect disapproval. After experiencing an absence of the Lord's spirit for over a year, Cunningham was depressively ill in April 1714 at London. During what was

---

[51] They witnessed the utterances of an obscure Fifeshire aristocrat, Lady Abden, a convert who, along with her small child, uttered predictions whilst in a state of trance. Hope was unimpressed. Lady Abden 'had several views of my friends and together with my cure, which made me go to her, but found very little satisfaction, she did indeed hit me in some things but I could have told her a great many more of that kidney my self'. (Hope to Ramsay, 16 Sept., 1709, NLS, 4796).

[52] Lundie was firmly opposed to the Prophets whom he thought deluded and dangerous. See also his letter to Ramsay from Leyden of 18 February, 1710 NLS, 4976.

[53] Henderson, Mystics, p. 203.

[54] Cunningham to Ramsay, November (?), 1709, NLS, 4796. Cunningham was imprisoned on at least one occasion, when touring the Lowlands uttering 'Warnings' that God's punishment upon unbelievers was immanent. He led a mission to the Continent in 1712-13, and died a prisoner of the English having joined the Rebel forces in 1715 under what he believed to be divine guidance (Schwartz, Prophets, pp. 159-162).

obviously a serious personal crisis, he may well have consulted Cheyne again but we have no evidence of the nature of their contact after the conversion.[55] In view of Cheyne's cautious and practical attitude to spiritual matters, we can be almost certain that he thought Cunningham's actions were the result of self-deluding zeal or simply nervous illness. We have already seen how, when Ramsay wanted to retreat to Rosehearty in 1708, Cheyne confirmed the advice of Dr Keith. Part of that advice (excluded from the previous extract), was that 'you are young and had a great deal of Actively [Activity?], Fire, and Spirit, and that solitude and retirement and mechanism paid sometimes strange pranks with such people'.[56] Cheyne was probably aware of the Camisard phenomena when he expressed this warning about the moral and physical dangers attached to religious *Enthusiasm*. Keith and Cheyne employ a shared medical vocabulary which offered physiological explanations to comprehend this perceived danger. *Enthusiasm* was often portrayed as a kind of disease attributable to physiological causes: the result of an excess or overheating (hence 'ferment') of the 'animal spirits', the notional vehicle for the interaction between the material and non-material parts of the human constitution.[57] Keith's warning, as reported by Cheyne, neatly registers the shift away from humoral explanations ('Activity, Fire'), and 'Animal Spirits', to the iatro-mechanical model ('mechanism'), being propagated by Cheyne, who committed himself to a purely mechanistic explanation of this inter-action in terms of 'nerves and fibres' (a theory he never abandoned, though he did sometimes toy with a notional aether when discussing the related metaphysical problem of matter/spirit interaction).[58] Upon his return to Scotland, Cunningham wrote to Ramsay:

---

55 Schwartz, Prophets p. 161. There is no mention of Cheyne in Cunningham's letters of 1709 onwards to fellow Prophet Thomas Dutton (Slains MS, 562590). There is circumstantial evidence that they continued to communicate, but this does not necessarily denote approval as Ramsay's continued correspondence with Cunningham illustrates (NLS 4976). Rousseau refers to the destruction by fire of later Cheyne-Cunningham correspondence at 'Culladen House' in 1985 (*IDC*, p. 98 f.56). This is presumably a misprint for Cullen House, the home of Cheyne's quietist patron Lord Deskford, which was damaged by fire in 1987. The present Lord Deskford assures me that no manuscripts were housed at Cullen by the time of this fire, all the Cullen Archive (with a few of Cheyne's letters), having been removed to Register House, Edinburgh, between 1974-8.

56 29 Nov., Ibid..

57 G. S. Rousseau, *Science and the Discovery of the Imagination in Enlightenment England*, in Eighteenth- Century Studies 3, (Fall, 1969), pp. 108-35; and *The Doctrine of the Hollow Nerve in the 17th and 18th centuries*, in Medical, Science and Culture, ed. by Lloyd G. Stevenson and R. B. Multhauf, (Baltimore, 1968), pp. 108-35.

58 By the early eighteenth century, explanations in terms of spiritual possession were on the wane and being replaced by purely physicalist accounts: 'humoural' explanations were being replaced by 'mechanistic' ones (R. Porter, Mind Forg'd Manacles, pp. 39-54). Cheyne's place within this debate has not been adequately assessed, but is discussed below where relevant: briefly in 1715 he was still an adherent of Borelli's theory of animal spirits, but he was speculating upon the possibility, first proposed

> Dr K. has wrote to me very obligingly a long excellent letter about...[the Prophets]...but in general I can't enter into his thoughts. I don't think a good tho' imperfect Spirit durst presume to ascribe to itself the name and attributes of the Almighty nor dare I say the Happy Effects I see proceed from this Dispensation (as they call it) can shew from nature, magical energy, or the Influence of Bad Spirits...Tho' I wrote very freely to Dr K. yet I must tell you that the esteem I have for his Penetration and Knoweledge in spiritual matters is one of the chief things that keeps my judgement in an even Byass.[59]

Cheyne probably endorsed Keith's three possible explanations to discredit the Camisards. They would both have read the transcripts of Cunningham's fascinating confessional correspondence with Garden, copies of which were privately circulated amongst the quietists to illustrate the critical attitude of their spiritual director to the Prophets.

Cheyne would not have had to look beyond his immediate Scottish circle for support in not joining the Prophets. From his retreat at 'Isleworth', Ramsay sent a stream of denunciatory letters to Cunningham and all their associates. He asked Lundie, at Leyden, to ask for Poiret's opinion, and Poiret in turn wrote directly to Ramsay of his 'solid reasons' for being 'utterly averse to entertain any good opinion of them'.[60] Ramsay was so zealously against them he nearly lost Cunningham's friendship. Pitsligo, who suspended his judgement (he hoped the Prophets were genuine because of the damage it would do to religion if otherwise), was to soberly remind Ramsay, in the light of his denunciations of Cunningham, that 'a true B-----ist is as hated and despis'd a creature as a Camizar'.[61] Pitsligo had personal reasons for remaining sympathetic since his sister Jean Forbes, Cheyne's other patient that summer, was another convert. She joined the sect under similar circumstances as Cunningham. Indeed the fact that recovery from illhealth appears to have prompted the conversion of several Prophets including Fatio, John Lacy and Thomas Dutton has led Schwartz to discuss the psychological significance of this motivation in some detail.[62]

---

by Newton in The Opticks (1706), that the nervous fibres might be pervaded by 'an infinitely subtle Spirit', or 'Aura'; Newton's 'Aetherial Medium', (PP, 1715, p. 314). Cheyne was noted by contemporaries for his rejection of the old hypothesis of animal spirits in favour of vibrating solid nervous fibres. Though he considered the idea that the aether was a potential medium between matter and spirit, realising this led to a situation of infinite regress, he retreated into non-commitment (EM, I, Ch. IX, and below Chs. 7 and 9).

59 Cunningham to Ramsay, 18 July, 1709, NLS, 4796.

60 Ibid., Lundie to Ramsay, Leyden, 18 Feb., 1710 (enclosing Poiret's lost reply to Ramsay).

61 Pitsligo to Ramsay, 27 November 1709, (NLS, 4976). He perhaps meant 'Bourignonist', as Schwartz reads it, but 'Behmenist' also fits. In either case the message was essentially the same.

62 Schwartz also notes that many 'miraculous cures' were publicised in the 1690s (Prophets, pp. 218; 86; 108-10 and 124-5). Sir Thomas Hope, although sceptical, also sought a cure through the Prophets. A notable example is the case of the convert Sir Richard Bulkeley, who suffered from a deformed

Many of Cheyne's 'spiritual friends', such as Lee, Keith, Lundie and Ramsay discussed the medico-philosophical implications of the Camisard phenomena. Cheyne would have known of the case of Mrs Mary Heath, the daughter of the Rev. Mr Heath of Bathwick, near Bath, who was restored and healed of her 'lunacy and lameness' at a meeting of the Prophets in February 1713. Dr Keith, along with Francis Lee and a Dr John Coughen, examined the details of Mrs Heath's recovery at Richard Roach's request but signed a declaration on 10 December 1713 to the effect that 'there is insufficient evidence of a miracle'.[63] Undoubtedly other such cases arose in which Cheyne, Keith, Lee and other interested parties were called upon to give their professional opinion regarding supposedly miraculous cures. He may have specifically had his patient Cunningham in mind when later, in his Essay of Health and Long Life (1724), he warned of the kind of melancholy:

> which is called *Religious*, because 'tis conversant about Matters of *Religion*', but arises amongst those with 'little solid piety' and 'is merely a *Bodily Disease*, produced by an ill *Habit* or *Constitution*. wherein the *Nervous System* is broken and disordered....This Melancholy arises generally from a *Disgust* or *Disrelish* of worldly *Amusements* and *Creature Comforts*, whereupon the Mind turns to *Religion* for *Consolation* and *Peace*. But as the Person is in a very imperfect and unmortified State, not duly instructed and disciplined, and ignorant how to govern himself, there ensues *Fluctuation* and *Indocility, Scrupulosity, Horror* and *Despair* (EH, p 157).

Cheyne had been forced to give serious thought to the question of personal revelation and how a pious physician distinguishes between genuine and false movements of the spirit.

## Mysticism and 'Natural Enthusiasm'

Cheyne had long felt that the human body and its cure was the most neglected part of Newton's millennial disclosure of the deep workings of nature. His professional concerns, and his own personal experience of physical and mental breakdown, drew him towards a religious ethos that could interpret nervous agitation as a providential sign of millennial fulfilment. The Newtonian physicist Fatio had found the universal key to the crucial union of matter and spirit through a Prophetic revelation and turned to clock-making in a practical search for perpetual motion. Cheyne probably did think

---

spine. Cheyne's fellow 'mystic', Nathaniel Hooke told Spence (with their mutual friend, the similarly crippled poet Pope in mind), that 'Bulkeley was promised by one of the French Prophets, that his back should be straightened. He went so far as to let him choose his shape. He fixed on a tall Irish officer, one of the best turned in the nation, and actually had a suit of clothes made for himself by him' (Anecdotes, I, p. 360).

63 Bodleian, Rawlinson MS D. 832.

that the revelational healing of the body held the key to the 'universal panacea' sought by many millenarian physicians which, as G. S. Rousseau remarks, represented 'the apex of medicine just as the perpetual motion machine was the apex of physics'.[64] He may have decided, as Rousseau suggests, 'that extreme illness followed by healing was itself the highest form of revelation: the basis for a philosophical natural religion based on the body of man', and he may have seen a millennial significance in the fact that his own 'nervous' crisis coincided to some extent with the arrival of the Prophets, but his contact with Scottish quietists confirmed his suspicions that such fitful agitations are easily misinterpreted.[65] In this context, Rousseau fails to observe that in the *Case of the Author* Cheyne dates his first major revelational recovery to 1709-10, (not 1706-7), when he finally healed a protracted stomach disorder through the use of Quinine:

> I found so wonderful a Change on my whole Man, as *Spirits, Chearfulness, Strength* and *Appetite*, by it, that I thought it *Enchantment*, and could scarce believe I was myself; and had I been much *Enthusiastically* given, would have accounted it *Miraculous*, being naturally one of these *Quick Thinkers*, who have a great Sensibility either of Pleasure or Pain...From that Time forward I encreas'd in *Spirits, Strength, Appetite* and *Gaiety* (EM, pp. 340-1).

Although this confirms that Cheyne's sympathetic notion of nervous sensibility was deeply rooted in his own religious experience of illness and recovery, he specifically denies that he went so far as to believe (as 'enthusiasts' like Cunningham did), that he was the subject of a miracle, and that his cure was anything more than the result of God acting through the established laws of nature. Cheyne may have been writing this as a matter of worldly caution or affected humility, but all the evidence of his attitude to personal revelation suggests that he deeply mistrusted the religious and philosophical assumptions employed by 'scientist-seekers' like Fatio to endorse the dramatic conversions and miraculous healings claimed by the Prophets.

Cheyne was wary of claims that anyone can suddenly undergo spiritual 'restoration' without first being a novitiate. Many of the spiritual biographies he read confirmed St. Augustine's doctrine that reunion with God requires repeated acts of purification and mortification. His endorsement of this cautious doctrine is made particularly clear in a passage he wrote towards the end of his life in response to the Methodists field-preachers who were performing sudden 'New Birth' conversions and miraculous cures:

> The *Operations* and Influences of the Divine *Spirit*, or *Grace* and spiritual Aid and assistance, are *Secret and Imperceptible*; and are allways to be suspected, when they are *impetuous*,

---

64 Schwartz, Prophets, p. 250; Rousseau,; *IDC*, p. 95, f. 48.

65 *IDC*, p. 99.

> *sensible* and acting only by *Fits* and *Starts*, as the gross Macin [sic] is *in* or *out* of *Tune*, and as the animal Functions play *easily* or *labour*, especially in *young unexperienced* Persons, who have not been *tried* and *purified* in the School of the *Cross*; for these uncommon and *extraordinary*, or even *perceptible* Operations of the *Divine Spirit*, seldom happen *pure, sincere* and *unmixt*; but to the long and severely *Tried* and *Purified*, and when the Passions, Appetites, and *Spiritual Humours* are moderated, calm'd and subsued, on the Decline of Life spent in due Retirement, and proper Silence; not in the *Storm* and *Tempest*, but in the *still calm Voice*, does the Divine *Spirit* speak; and a truely humble, and enlighten'd Person, ought to suspect himself, *get above*, and pass over every Impulse, *Sweetening* or *Glance* of Light that comes not thus accompanied. Children, Beginners, and Noviciats in the *Spiritual Life*, are often gratified with such *sugarings* for their Encouragement; but Bread is for grown persons, which is got by the *sweat* of *the Brow*, and bearing the Cross; and a prudent staid Person will have too great a regard for the Purity and Dignity of the *Divine Spirit*, to bring him down, to account for all the *mechanical* and *animal* operations of his *volatile* and various *Imagination* (ER, p. 339).

It was this concept of the spiritual novitiate, (of 'Spiritual Youths'), emphasising a gradual ascetic process of millennial enlightenment, that had earlier provided a rationale for Cheyne's personal experience of cycles of revelation and remorse, 'Light' and 'Darkness'. It was a dominant feature of Scottish quietism. All Cheyne's writings on sensibility place a positive value upon quietist, ameliorative concepts of 'recollection', 'tranquillity', and 'clarity', rather than the anarchic, nervous overthrow of the body natural (and political), associated with the Montanist 'Dispensation' of the Camisards.[66]

At first sight, Cheyne's outward conformity is difficult to reconcile with what we have already seen of his close social proximity (from at least 1708-9 onwards), to unorthodox scholars such as Francis Lee, Richard Roach, and Dionysius Freher whose studies belong within a 'mystic' tradition of Neo-Platonists, hermeticist-alchemists, cabbalists and visionaries which had appealed to earlier radicals. As Roy Porter has recently emphasised, Cheyne continued to offer essentially physicalist, mechanical explanations for nervous phenomena. Whatever the nature of his contact with theosophists, Cheyne was no anachronistic alchemist, and he openly rejected 'the wild Dreams of such pyro-technical enthusiasts' as Van Helmont, whose search for a universal panacea or perpetuum mobile was taken up by some of Fatio's fellow converts.[67] The only panacea Cheyne promoted was a pious acceptance of the grace of Jesus Christ, and the only perpetuum mobile he described was the 'Human Machine', kept alive by a Neo-Platonic 'Divine Spark'. At the end of his life Cheyne wrote that 'the *Christian Philosophy*, represented in its True Light , is infinitely beyond anything that was ever thought of, or could enter into the Heart of Creatures

---

[66] The Prophets themselves became more quietist after contact with Scottish Bourignonists, (Prophets, pp. 52-4 and 162-69).

[67] Mullett, Letters, LXII, p. 96.

to imagine for extirpating the *Diseases* of the *Mind*...for remedying the Distempers of the *Body*, to make a Man live as long as his original *Frame* was design'd to last...(NM, ppp. 66-7).

It is possible to trace some of the social and intellectual origins of Cheyne's distinctly conservative, quietist form of 'inward Christianity'. The most significant feature of Cheyne's mature millennial *Conjectures* as published in An Essay on Regimen (1740), is his endorsement of the doctrine of Universal Salvation. This is a heresy with a long history but, as D. P. Walker has shown, in the early eighteenth century its chief proponents were the Philadelphians. It seems likely therefore that Cheyne originally embraced the doctrine of Universal Salvation shortly after his first breakdown as a result of his own sense of being subject to 'miracles of mercies' and his social proximity to Philadelphians.[68] His immediate source for publishing the doctrine in 1740 can be directly traced to the theosophical writings of a Franco-German Behmenist scholar, Charles Hector Marquis St. George de Marsay, which appeared in French in several volumes between 1738 and 1740. Fluent in French, Cheyne studied these texts with enthusiasm, and in 1739 he told the poet and mystic scholar John Byrom that he was privately circulating Marsay's works in order to obtain 'the sentiments of persons conversant and experienced in the mysteries of heaven and the means of the universal restoration', adding that his own mature medical writings were designed to futher this process.[69] At the time of his death in April, 1743, Cheyne was arranging the publication of an English edition of Marsay with the help of Samuel Richardson.[70] In fact Marsay was himself a direct inheritor of the Philadelphian message of Universal Salvation through his contact with the Moravian leader, Count Zinzendorf.[71] Although Jane Leade had been an disciple of Dr

---

68 Ramsay, for one, continued to hold this optimistic belief throughout his life. Other probable sources for Cheyne's Universalism include: Origen's Contra Celsum, which argues for keeping the doctrine a secret, as did Tillotson when he preached it before Queen Anne in 1690. Thomas Burnet, in his *De Statu Mortuorum*(cautiously privately printed by Mead in 1720), advises the double standard of *veritas arcana* and *veritas vulgaris* to which Cheyne subscribed. Socinians privately adopted the heresy, including Locke, Newton (?), and Samuel Clarke; Whiston proclaimed it alongside his Arianism. Cheyne may have also seen the heresy upheld in the works of Gregory Nyssa, the Cambridge Platonists, Peter Sterry and Jeremiah White (whose Restoration of All Things was published by Roach in 1712).

69 Cheyne to Byrom, 17 December, 1741, in Selections from the Journals and Papers of John Byrom, ed. by Henri Talon (1950), p. 208. The circle Cheyne alludes to (described below in Chapter 9, included William Law, John Heylyn, David Hartley, Lady Huntingdon and Samuel Richardson.

70 Mullet, Letters, 123-5.

71 'The Life of Charles Hector Marquis St George de Marsay', unpublished translation from the German made for the sentimental, Behmenist novelist, Henry Brooke, (Dr Williams's Lib., MS 1.1.44) and preface to Marsay, Discourses on the Spiritual Life, translated from the French, to which is Prefix'd a Letter giving some Account of the Author; with remarks on the writers commonly called Mystick or Spiritual (Edinburgh, 1749). I have identified the author of the *Letter* as Pitsligo and the addressee as a

Pordage, the friend of Ranters and other radical sectaries of the Interregnum, already by the 1690s, in the words of D. P. Walker, the English Behmenists 'looked forward for the preparation of the millennium in the gradual purification and unification of the Protestant Churches, rather than in the sudden and violent destruction of the forces of Antichrist' (pp. 121-2). In keeping with the Scottish Bourignonists, Lee (as noted earlier), had argued that the Philadelphians were 'utterly Averse to all Sectarianism and Partiality in religion'. Although they recognised that there are 'gross corruptions and Deviations in most, or all, of the Christian Bodies from the *Apostolical Rule*', they did not wish or encourage others to 'formally Dissent, or separate' from the 'Anglican Church to which most belonged...the Society of Philadelphians are not for *Turning the World Upside Down*...they are not enemies of the Civil or Ecclesiastical Rights of any'.[72] Mrs Leade had problems reconciling her own optimistic Universalism with more traditional Behmenist notions of eternal damnation. She argued that Universalism was the new doctrine promised during the 'Latter Days'. In 1740, we find Cheyne employing the same argument to justify his promotion of the heresy as an integral part of his medico-religious practice.[73]

The recent work of Schwartz on the history of the French Prophets has done much to enlarge our understanding of the distinctions and connections between the pietist sects with whom Cheyne had contact. In so doing, Schwartz plots a move amongst British pietists towards an introverted, quietist millenarianism by the second decade of the eighteenth century which absorbed the more radical ethos of the Prophets[74] This shift is particularly important for an understanding of the role of mysticism in Cheyne's later career, as the psychological obsession with mental calm and stability ('recollection'), informing this reactionary tradition came to underscore his influential doctrines of nervous sensibility. Cheyne shared his introverted form of millenarianism with quietist Philadelphian 'seekers' like Ramsay, Keith and Lee, who recoiled from the dramatic activities of the French Prophets but continued to study

---

quietist associate, James Ferguson of Pitfour. Details in my unpublished paper, *Mystical Jacobitism: Lord Pitsligo's Prefaces to Marsay*.

72 Lee, State of the Philadelphian Society (1697), pp. 7-8.

73 When telling Byrom of Marsay's 'accessory' doctrines of which 'Universal Salvation' was clearly the most controversial, Cheyne remarked that 'if a person whom I admire as much as Mr. Law rejects these accessories (though we are promised in the latter days more and fuller lights, and the Holy spirit promised shall lead us into all truth), I will go so far give them up as not to propagate them with that blind zeal I might otherwise do' (Byrom, Selections, p. 212). Law did object to Marsay's dangerous 'nostrums'. Pitsligo defends Universalism in his anonymous Preface to Marsay's Discourses (Edinburgh, 1749). Cheyne knew George Garden's similar arguments in his Apology for...Bourignon (1699).

74 Schwartz, Prophets, Ch., 5.

the mystics and the millenium.[75] Their sentimental mysticism fused the Augustinian tradition informing the quietism of Guyon with the Behmenist absorption of Hermetic and Neo-Platonic concepts of correspondence (or as Cheyne termed it 'Divine Analogy), in a politically cautious, patient, introverted ethos of the 'Restoration of all Things'.[76]

The distinction between this quietist millenarianism and the 'enthusiastic sensibility' of the Camisards was usefully defined back in 1943 by J. L. Davis in an article, revealingly entitled, *Mystical versus Enthusiastic Sensibility*.[77] Davis argues that 'there are adequate grounds for making a distinction between Mysticism and Enthusiasm as historical types of Christian sensibility' (p. 301). The mystical type is associated primarily with St. Augustine and Neo-Platonism (with which Cheyne was deeply engaged), whereas that of the enthusiast was often identified with the tradition of Montanus, (as in Lee's anti-Camisard *History of Montanism* 1710). Both traditions 'involved the conviction that the individual might know God as a presence through Christ or the Holy Ghost, and that this knowledge was a mode of complete experience that enlisted and transformed every faculty, including sense-perception' (Ibid., p. 302). The two types of sensibility differ in their conception of how this knowledge is achieved and its communicative or charismatic content. For the mystics, to whom Cheyne turned, this knowledge came about through, what Davis tentatively terms 'regenerative gradualism' involving a slow advance through various stages of spiritual awareness.[78] In contrast, enthusiasts like the Camisards saw no need for initiation,

---

75 Lee, State of the Philadelphian Society, p. 10. Even before the arrival of the Camisards, Lee had been cautious of modern claims to prophecy (Lee to Dodwell, 'Apologetical Letter', April 1699, printed in Walton, p. 219). He told the Philadelphians they were better to guard themselves against 'the Quick-Sands of *Credulity*, than against the Rock of *Incredulity*' (State of the Philadelphian Society, p. 23). Compare Cheyne's career and that of Lee as described by Thune, pp. 143-147.

76 Marsay's 'Mystical and Literal Explication of J. Christ to St John the Apostle', opens with prefatorial remarks upon the 'New Birth' or 'Work of Regeneration' argueing that although Revelation has an 'external' historical meaning, 'it is likewise the whole *Mystic Divinity*, or an account of the ways which *J. Christ* conduct every soul wherein he designs to reveal or manifest himself and to re-establish his Kingdom'. Revelation 'is therefore a Recitat of what J. Christ operates in that Soul, and of the various States thro' which she must pass in order to her Renovation; what must happen to her and what she must experience from the first step of her conversion to god until her entire re-union with him, or until her regeneration, whereby she again becomes a new Creature, the Temple where God dwells, the New Jerusalem'. (from manuscript translation which belonged to Forbes and was part of Cheyne's project to publish Marsay in English, SRO, Ch 12, 20, Items 16-17, I, p.16).

77 JHI, 1943, 4 pp. 301- 319. This essay is indispensable for distinguishing the temper of Cheyne's 'mysticism'.

78 Davis notes that these stages were sometimes reduced to three or enlarged to seven, but Evelyn Underhill's account of five provides a useful means of definition: awakening, purgation, illumination, 'the dark night of the soul' and finally union. This conception is rooted in a basic Platonist assumption, to which Cheyne subscribed, that there is an inherent hierarchy within nature, that man and his being

purification, mortification, or self-doubt but claimed that Divine Inspiration comes suddenly to the unprepared, with profound bodily changes such as sudden cures, and other hysteric symptoms, in a process of what Davis terms 'inspirational automatism'. Cheyne clearly subscribed to the mystic rather than enthusiastic tradition and this distinction is vital to any understanding of his apparently paradoxical career and unorthodox religionist and fashionable Hanoverian physician.

Cheyne was a conservative social reformer of a very different kind to the political radicals of the 'leveller' tradition. In his 1740 preface Cheyne offered a rationale for his earlier reticence in writing openly about deep religious matters by recourse to a traditional hermetic notion of knowledge. He remarks defensively that he is 'sensible that even some undoubted truths, that may hurt the Weak, ought to be concealed or enjoy'd only in Secret: the same Degrees of Light not being equally luminous and perceptive to all Eyes' (p. iv-v). This double standard of *veritas arcana* and *veritas vulgaris* was a conservative and elitist doctrine adopted by contemporary quietists anxious to outwardly conform to the established order.[79] As the obituarist in The Gentleman's Magazine (XIII, 1742), was to remark:

> *Cheyne* had a peculiarly sincere and vital Warmth for *Christianity*. He considered it in the primitive Ages as 'twas practiced, and not in the present as 'tis taught. He made his Writings all subservient to the Virtue and Glory of God. He lost not his Creator in the Infinite Works of Creation; he lov'd the Clergy, and was belov'd by them.

If anything, Cheyne's *Primitive Christianity* was allied to High-Church, Episcopalian sympathies, although many pietists practised a degree of ecumenicism. Whilst professionally he courted the patronage of Whigs like Roxburghe, Chandos, and Hervey, he remained an obsessive upholder of a rigidly hierarchical 'Great Scale of Being' and a vision of natural order which for many of his closest associates supported a Tory, (often Jacobite), political ideology. Whilst he cautiously promoted the anti-Calvinist doctrine of Universal Salvation, he openly denounced the Arian heresy of Newton's less cautious disciples, Whiston and Clarke, and publicly supported the Anglican communion in what appears to have been a life-long sympathy with the rituals of the High-Church.[80]

Cheyne specifically dates his specialisation in 'nervous cases' ('they seeming more intimately to concern myself'), to around 1708-9, when the question of psycho-somatic disturbance had become both a personal and professional issue after the

---

takes a very low place on this ladder below God. Fallen man wallows in the realm of corrupt, imperfect, evil physicality (pp. 302-3).

[79] See footnote 69 above for contemporary adherents to this doctrine.

[80] ER, p. 126-7; 186-7.

mission of the Camisards, but modern scholars must avoid merely replicating Bernoulli's indiscriminate approach to the unorthodox religious concerns of some British Newtonians. Cheyne was not unique amongst the first generation of Newton's followers in abandoning a conventional career in natural philosophy because of religious concerns. Traditionally Fatio and Whiston have been dismissed as lunatics who suddenly abandoned respectable 'scientific' careers to become religious fanatics. To some degree this has also been the verdict on the 'Newtonian heretic', Cheyne.[81] But when he suffered his 'crisis' in 1705-6, unlike Fatio and Whiston, he had not gained the patronage and position in the academic establishment they briefly enjoyed before their disgrace. Though, like them, he has been portrayed as completely abandoning 'serious science' for mysticism, unlike Fatio and Whiston, Cheyne placed his career upon a different footing largely outwith professional or scientific institutions, and gained cult status for his practice amongst the intellectual elite. Wittily rebutting accusations of being a 'mere Enthusiast who resolv'd all things into Allegory', Cheyne promoted his millenarian-medicine with a sufficient measure of outward conformity to enjoy a large measure of social acceptance within the Hanoverian establishment, as he promoted his 'Dietetick Gospel' in a practical contribution to the millennial project to keep the 'Spirits Calm and Clear'. Cheyne partly achieved this social compromise through a conscious adherence to a quietist ethos of being 'in' but not 'of' the world, propagated by, Poiret, Fénelon, Guyon and the other Continental 'mystics'. After 1705 Cheyne sought a more affective basis for his faith, one with which he hoped to confront what he felt to be the atheistical tendencies of deism. But this did not mean that his subsequent contact with fellow seekers - Bourignonists, Behmenists, Camisards and other so-called 'enthusiasts' - was uncritical, nor wholly unrelated to his earlier, supposedly more 'scientific' concerns. It was more a case of adapting earlier methods to new beliefs. Evidence of the resulting intellectual synthesis is to found in the rewritten Philosophical Principles (1715), which formed the theological basis of Cheyne's later career and is the subject of the next chapter.

---

81 Epithet from Bowles, *Thesis*, p. 94.

# 5

# PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF REVEAL'D RELIGION

Go happy Soul, in Realms above
Expiate unconfin'd
And with new Science there improve
Thy penetrating Mind.

New Science ev'n to Thee unknown
While limited thy View,
Though every Art thou mad'st thy own
And every Science knew.
(Anon, *On the Death of Dr Cheyne*)[1]

## Introduction: Cheyne in Academia

The contemporary popularity of Cheyne's mature medical writings is beyond dispute. It was through the philosophical sections of these later works, in which he refined his basic theodicy of 1715, that many of his readers became familiar with his unorthodox metaphysical and theological ideas.[2] But his earlier (more abstruse), account of his theodicy, despite being almost hidden for many readers within a thorny hedge of abstruse mathematics, was not completely obscured. Cheyne's breakdown accounts for the somewhat tangential course of his career away from the more conventional avenues pursued by his Newtonian colleagues, who remained intimate within the Royal Society and College of Physicians. But we must not let Cheyne's failure to impress the Newtonians with his derivative 1705 edition of the Philosophical Principles, nor his uneasy role as, what Bowles calls 'a Newtonian heretic', deflect us from the fact that in both its original and revised versions, Cheyne's early work as a metaphysician and theologian was familiar to at least one generation of students eager to comprehend the new 'principles' of natural philosophy and their religious implications.

The general availability of the Philosophical Principles throughout the first half of the century in itself suggests a measure of popularity. In its expanded form of 1715,

---

1 Mullett, Letters, p.129, possibly by Charles Wesley (see Chapter 8).

2 Cheyne provides the basic 'Principles' of his theodicy in Chapter 6, *Of the Passion*, in EH (1724). He returned to theology with a vengeance in 1740 in the 'Five Discourses' which make up Part II of An Essay of Regimen.

the book was reprinted in 1724, 1734, 1736, and posthumously in 1753.[3] European scholars had further opportunities for becoming familiar with Cheyne's early expositions of a Newtonian-based theodicy. The liberal Remonstrant *philosophe*, Jean Le Clerc (with whom Cheyne may have been in personal contact), had earlier reviewed the 1705 edition in his influential Bibliothèque Ancienne et Moderne (Amsterdam, 1715).[4] In 1717, the same journal included a critique of the work by N. Hartsoeker, who had access to the 1715 edition (VIII, pp. 303-350). A review of the first edition also appeared in the Acta Eruditorum (Leipzig), in 1710 (pp. 454-464). In 1729 extracts appeared in an Italian edition printed at Naples, and as late as 1772, extracts translated by Jean le Clerc appeared in a Dutch compendium.[5] Meanwhile, at Boston, Massachusetts, by April 1717, the important 1715 edition was being eagerly read by the colonial religious leader Cotton Mather.[6] It was through popular works such as Cheyne's Philosophical Principles, rather than through the specialised Principia itself, that the Newtonian concepts which came to dominate many areas of thought during the ensuing century reached a general literary audience.[7]

Cheyne's contemporary standing as a respected philosopher-theologian has been greatly underestimated. In Britain, it is no exaggeration to say that his Philosophical Principles, in both its forms, became a standard textbook for the teaching of Newtonianism to students of natural and moral philosophy and metaphysics during the first half of the century. After ordering the reprinting of the work in 1724, Cheyne immodestly remarked that it was undertaken in the hope that young men may imbibe the principles of religion at the same time as learning those of natural philosophy for 'accordingly it has been and is still used for that Purpose at both Universities' (EH, viii). This was no idle boast, for the work was amongst the recommended reading at both Oxford and Cambridge, as well as at the Scottish Universities well into the eighteenth century. At Cambridge, until at least 1740, the work was a specified text for both the metaphysics, and moral and natural philosophy courses, (indeed the particular copy of the 1715 edition used for the present study originally belonged to a

---

[3] Although all these editions bear 'Corrected and Enlarged' on the titlepage, they show no substantial changes from that of 1715. Those appearing in Cheyne's lifetime were all printed for George Strahan who simply updated the date on the main title-page and on the half-titles for two distinct 'Parts'. The 1753 edition was published by D. Browne who bought many of the deceased Strahan's copyrights.

[4] III, pp. 41-157. Cole, pp. 31-53.

[5] Principi Filosofici di Religione Naturale, overro Elementi della Filosofia, a Della Religione de Essi Serivati. Tradotta dall'idioma Inglese dal Cavaliere Tommaso Dereham published by il Moscheni (Naples, 1729) and Den Schapper en zyn Bestier te Kennen in zyne Schepselen..etc., published by A. Van der Kroe (Amsterdam, 1772).

[6] The Diary of Cotton Mather, II, p. 450.

[7] G. S. Rousseau, *Science Books and their Readers*, in Books and their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England, pp. 214-218.

Magdalene undergraduate).[8] At Oxford a similar position pertained in at least one college, Queen's, where Joseph Smith (1670-1756), included Cheyne's Principles amongst a list of recommended reading for his students of logic and natural philosophy. [9] It probably had a similar status on syllabi at other Oxford colleges during this period. Certainly it was in the form of undergraduate reading at Oxford that John Wesley, for one, first encountered Cheyne's theodicy, and the same probably holds true for William Law and Dr Johnson, whose interest in Cheyne not only as a renowned physician but as a man of deep learning in theology and metaphysics will be discussed elsewhere.[10]

Cheyne's books were also in wide circulation within the academic establishments of his native Scotland. For example, his Principles formed part of the recommended reading for the metaphysics and natural theology course taught by Hutcheson's predecessor Gershom Carmichael, the first occupant of the Chair of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow.[11] In his *Synopsis Theologiae Naturalis* (Edinburgh, 1729) (p. 18), Carmichael cites Cheyne alongside Pelling, Derham, Ray and Nieuwent as an authority for the argument from design. In so far as this represents Carmichael's Glasgow lecture course in natural theology (which he argued formed the basis of moral philosophy and natural jurisprudence), we see how Cheyne's work formed an integral part of the intellectual climate in early Enlightenment Glasgow.

A similar situation at Edinburgh is interesting with respect to Cheyne's obscure place in intellectual history. By 1725 the third edition of the Principles (1724), alongside his Methodus Inversa and Essay of Health were amongst the selected works present on the shelves of the 'Physiological Library', a subscription library founded by

---

8 NLS Shelf No. B.C.L. B4 88, inscribed by Thomas Squire, admitted a sizar in 1714, who became a Lincolnshire clergyman (DNB). Dean Waterland, tutor and master at Magdelene, includes Cheyne's work in his 'Advice to a Young Student' (originally drawn up in 1706, but revised in 1730 and 1740), where it forms the recommended reading for the autumn months in the second year of the natural philosophy syllabus, preceded by works by Euclid, Wells, Locke, Whiston and Keill. Cheyne was to be followed by Rohault, Burnet, Whiston, Wells, Whitby and Puddendorf. Waterland considered Cheyne 'easy to one who understands the two former' (i.e. Keill's lectures and 'Simpson's Conic Sections'). Cheyne may well have been used in other Colleges for which evidence is more obscure. See Christopher Wordsworth, Scholae Academicae: Some Account of the Studies at the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, 1877), p. 79; p. 129 and pp. 333-6.

9 J. Yolton, *Schoolmen, Logic and Philosophy* in The History of the University of Oxford, V, pp. 581-2. Cheyne's work is listed alongside ones by Henry More, Francis Hutcheson, Keill, s'Gravesande, Worster, Locke, Bishop Browne and Clarke's Boyle Lectures. Smith was Provost, 1730-56.

10 For Johnson see Ch. 7 and both Wesley and Law, Ch. 8, below.

11 J. Moore and M. Silverthorne, *Gershom Carmichael and the Natural Jurisprudence Tradition in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* in I. Holt and M. Ignatieff, Wealth and Virtue (Cambridge 1983), pp. 73-87.

the professor of Natural Philosophy, Robert Steuart, 'and some of his students' on 2 April, 1724, to supplement existing facilities.[12] It seems highly probable that this was where Hume first came to read Cheyne, for the young philosopher, as a member of Steuart's natural philosophy class, was one of the undergraduate subscribers to the library.[13] When Hume later came to write his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, composed in the 1750s (but published posthumously in 1779), he drew directly upon passages from Cheyne's Principles.[14] He may also have paid attention to Cheyne's work on fluxions and arguments for the infinite divisibility of matter, related topics which informed the discussion of time and space in the Treatise (1739), which was begun around 1726 and also, as its subtitle indicates, sought to introduce 'the Experimental Method of reasoning' to 'Moral Subjects'.[15] Later we will see how Cheyne's popular medical writings were read with critical attention by his younger contemporaries associated with the Scottish Enlightenment. For the present it is enough to reiterate that even when Cheyne confined himself to the role of metaphysician and theologian, he was far from being an obscure, neglected figure of contemporary letters. His mature popularity as a pious physician merely generated continued interest in his metaphysical 'whimsies'.

The ubiquity of Cheyne's Principles, even in its distinctly unorthodox amended form, and its use within the English and Scottish universities, raises important questions regarding the status of a book that earlier commentators, like Bowles, have dismissed as anachronistic and eccentric. As one of the more imaginative early interpretations of the theological and moral consequences of Newtonianism, the full version of the work did not 'fall dead-born from the press' like Hume's now justly

---

12 The Physiological Library. Begun by Mr Steuart, and some of his students of natural philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, April 2, 1724; and augmented by some gentlemen; and the students of natural philosophy, December 1724 (1725), (EUL, De 10. 127, p. 1). M. Barfoot, *Hume and the Culture of Science in the Early Eighteenth Century* in Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment ed. by M. A. Stewart (Oxford, 1990). I must thank Dr Barfoot for kindly allowing me to read an early draft of this paper.

13 This supposition is supported by Cheyne's popularity in 1724-5, prompted by the Essay of Health (1724). He still had close social connections with Edinburgh (see Ch. 7). His half-brother, William, as a recent graduate of Aberdeen and private tutor, was authorised to use the University Library on 3 October, 1723 (EUL, MSS Da. 2.i, 'Register of Members of the Library 1635- 1753'). His 'referee' was Prof. William Scott whose 2nd. yr., Greek Class was attended by Hume in the session 1722-23 (Matric., Register: EUL, S. Da, p. 62).

14 Hume The Natural History of Religion; Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion ed. by A. W. Colver and J. V. Price (Oxford, 1976), pp. 157-162. Cleanthes uses Cheyne's argument for Divine Analogy in Discourse II, (PP, pp. 5-6). Cheyne was first cited as the source by R. H. Hurlbutt in *David Hume and Scientific Theism*, JHI, xvii (1956), pp. 486-96.

15 It is beyond the scope of the present thesis to discuss Cheyne's adoption of Keill's notion of the infinite divisibility of matter. However it should be noted that his use of the concept and its metaphysical implications drew the critical attention of Berkeley, Dr Johnson, and Hume.

famed Treatise (1739). On the contrary, the reading of Cheyne's work was encouraged at established centres of learning. This must have contributed to Cheyne's contemporary status as not only an unorthodox medical 'wit', but an acknowledged man of profound scholarship and piety. Tutors, such as Waterland at Oxford, may have warned their pupils away from Cheyne's more heterodox metaphysical 'whimsies', but it is obvious that any eager religious-minded student would have read Part II, 'On Revealed Religion' with close, if critical attention. This certainly seems to have been the case with such notable readers as Berkeley, Hume, William Law, Mather, John Wesley, Dr Johnson and David Hartley, in all cases with differing, but far from negligible results. Many of their respective responses will be considered, where appropriate, below.

**The Cone of Creation**

Cheyne's Principles therefore, not only deserves attention as a significant popular work of Newtonian interpretation, but also as a key to understanding the fundamental religious framework within which we must view Cheyne's career as a populariser of an influential theory of nervous sensibility. In presenting an account of revealed religion, Cheyne's essential concern was to find an adequate model for explaining God's active, immanent relationship with a universe that was rapidly being reduced to nothing more than a very complex machine. The distant, almost absent God of the Newtonian scheme served the deistical natural religionists well but failed Cheyne when he needed to comprehend the millennial plan and explain why God had singled him out for a providential recovery from the brink of death. Consequently, he opens the Preface to Part II, with a theoretical model of the relationship between the material and spiritual worlds, which attempts to explain God's continued intimacy and providential control over creation. Cheyne describes a modified theory of the traditional *Great Chain of Being*.[16] Cheyne proposes an *Infinite Cone of Being* which is 'like, the *Shadow* of the dark Side of the *Earth*, circumscribed by the Light of the *Sun* in the empty Spaces of our System'. Its base is 'the *supreme and absolute Infinite*, the Origin of the Being and Faculties of all created Things' and its '*Body* is the whole *System* of Creatures, from the highest *spiritual Intelligence*; descending in a perpetual subordination, and continual Scale, down to *brute Matter'*. Although the base and

---

16 A. O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (Harvard, 1936). Lovejoy's standard account is challenged by L. E. Loemaker in The Struggle for Synthesis (1972), p. 74. F. Priestly *Pope and the Great Chain of Being* in Essays in English Literature From the Renaissance to the Victorian Age pp. 213-28. Cheyne's 'Cone of Being' is discussed in Bowles *Thesis*, Ch. 3.

body are an infinite distance apart, the cone is divided into horizontal sections, each of which is parallel with and similar to the base: 'So in this *perpetual Scale* of Creatures, considered in one View, together with their Creator, every *species* ...has the great *Lineaments*, and *prominent Out-Lines* of their *Base*, the Origin of all Being and Perfections, more strongly, clearly, and largely represented and express'd on, and by them'. Cheyne's essentially Neo-Platonic account combines the argument from analogy with the a priori aesthetic assumptions of the physico-theologians, that 'there is in all the Works of Nature a *Symmetry* and *Harmony*, running in a perpetual *Analogy*... through the whole and the parts'. As evidence, he cites numerous examples of this harmonious ordering as revealed by recent advances in natural philosophy, especially by Newton's accounts of the natural laws pertaining to optics, hydrostatics, astro-mechanics, and mathematics.[17]

From this model of a *Cone of Being,* Cheyne derives a number of *a posteriori* assumptions around which his theodicy is constructed, the first and most essential being that 'there is a perpetual *Analogy*, (physical, not mathematical) running on in a Chain, thro' the whole *System* of *Creatures*, up to their *creator;* ...That the Visible are Images of the Invisible, the sensible of the Insensible, the *Ectypical* of the *Archytipical*, the *Creatures* of the *Creator*, at an absolutely infinite distance' (II, p. [iii]). Although Cheyne's 'system' is profoundly orderly and hierarchical, the all-embracing 'ANALOGY OF THINGS' unites the whole of creation. Enabling us to comprehend the divine origins of ourselves and the world we inhabit, analogy provides the basis of all human knowledge: '*Mathematicks* and *Philosophy*, so far as they are just and genuine, are but Branches of the *Analogy*. *Mathematicks* are but this *Analogy* apply'd to Bodies, or *Systems* of these; or to the abstracted Nature of Things. Both suppose the Truth and Necessity of this *Analogy* without which they are but *Jargon* and *Romance*' (II, p. 41). Cheyne insists that to varying degrees of perfection, intelligent creatures and supremely man himself, partake of the nature of God: 'The *visible, intellectual* and *created Species* of Things, are Pictures, Images, and Representations of the *invisible, archytipal*, and *increated Species* of Things in the Mind of the Supreme Being'. As raw material for his creation, the all-wise God only had the ideas and 'architypal patterns of his own mind or imagination, finding, nothing without himself, that they should represent' (II, p. 45). Cheyne ensures that such a close intimacy exists between man and God that the latter is in danger of becoming overtly anthropomorphic.

---

[17] PP, pp, II, [ii], and pp. 36- 9.

Although anxious to establish an intimate connection between God and all the parts of his creation, Cheyne was fearful of appearing to countenance Spinoza's pantheism and is careful to place an infinite distance between the extremes of his scale or cone. We shall be seeing that, by 1740, he became less cautious and his earlier notion of Platonic emanations or 'sparkles' developed into a pantheistic vision of God as Nature. But in 1715 he limited himself to a number of more specific, almost mechanical analogies. In the most fundamental of his extrapolations he suggests that God's ubiquity in the spiritual dimension is analogous to space in the material realm. With his 'mathematics of infinites', Cheyne posits that a mathematical point and infinite space represent two extremes in nature between which lie all created things. Since matter requires by definition all three dimensions, it cannot possibly be infinite. By analogy, Cheyne concludes that absolute infinitude is only compatible with the Divine Nature, God being the only totally one and undifferentiated being: ' *Universal Space*, is the Image and Representation in nature, of the *Divine Infinitude*...or the *Universitas rerum omnium*':

> Hence universal Space may be very aptly called the Sensorium Divinitis, since it is the Place wherein all natural Things... are presented to the Divine Omniscience. Infinite Space is the Image of the Divine Infinitude, wherein as in a Picture of Him...all created Things present and manifest themselves to, the intuitive View of the supreme Infinite, what a Humane Sensorium may be supposed to be to Men (II, p. 54).

We are literally, *in God's thoughts*. Though he acts from an eminent distance, paradoxically, God remains 'intimately present, with every individual *Atom* of Matter' (Ibid.). This notion of 'God's Sensorium', was directly borrowed from one of Newton's tentative suggestions in the Principia, but Cheyne's adherence to a theosophical system of natural correspondences allowed him to give the idea greater psychological importance for the individual.

Hermetic notions of correspondence satisfied Cheyne's need to offer a philosophical explanation for the revelational, intuitive insights which he had registered at the very depths of his disordered being, and painfully measured with his delicate nerves. He argued that just as there are analogies on a macrocosmic level between man and God, on a microcosmic level the union between the material and spiritual parts of our individual natures also epitomises this hierarchical relationship: 'Compound intelligent Beings, are *Epitomes*, or *Images* of the *Universitas rerum*. In their Bodies, they resemble the *material System* of Things, in their *Spiritual Parts*, they resemble the Spiritual World, the Union of the two is a resemblance of...the Manner, the *supreme Being* governs the *material System* of Things'. His private revelational experiences clearly informed his assertion that by examining our own

natures, both physical (material), and mental (spiritual), we can become intimately and directly aware of the providential scheme or order of things.

An increasingly intuitive sense of pervasive analogy became the basis of all Cheyne's thinking:

> By this Principle, as a *Key*, the whole *phylosophy*, of Humane Nature, of the Animal, Rational, and Divine Life, of the Passions, and Affections of the Soul, and even of the *organism* of the Body, so far as is Just and Genuine, and given to meer Humane Reason to know, is to be unlock't, and that not *Metaphisically* but *Physically* and in Reality. But who is sufficient for the Detail of these Things? (p. 75).

Cheyne thought that he had found the millennial 'key' to the mystery of nature, although his final rhetorical outburst suggests that he found the experience awe inspiring. In this intuitive approach to nature, Cheyne anticipated later Romantic theories of the relations between the human spirit, a spiritualised nature and God. At the time of his youthful discovery of Newton's 'laws of nature' Cheyne displays a mathematician's obsession with constructing an all-embracing, intellectually pleasing 'system' that could neatly explain all the secrets of nature that are open to our admittedly limited comprehension. Newton's discoveries fed a general optimism amongst many late-seventeenth century virtuosi, who related such advances to a wider millennial belief in an intellectual enlightenment. It was probably Cheyne's early millenarian enthusiasm for 'Divine Analogy' which prompted Gregory to report, in May 1706, that the physician was in the habit of boasting 'among his Chronys... that he can give a reason of whatever God made'.[18] The mature Cheyne felt that in 'Divine Analogy' he had found the 'true Key' or *clavis* to the 'analysis of spiritual Natures'. [19] As Schwartz has shown, this concept of science as revelation, as the inspired millennial unveiling of all nature's secrets, was commonly held amongst Cheyne's mystical associates.[20] Fatio's discovery of the cause of gravity at a Camisard meeting is exemplary in this respect. Cheyne's reported boast anticipates that of the Prophet convert Thomas Dutton who wrote in 1708 that 'since I have had this Key [I] can scarce dip anywhere into the Old and New testaments; but I find something

---

18 Hiscock, p. 75.

19 ER, II, p. 20. Late in life, Cheyne learnt stenography from John Byrom, a fellow student of mysticism, for whom the development of a shorthand system was part of the search for a 'Universal Language' begun by Wilkins and other founders of the Royal Society. Cheyne shared this fascination with codes and ciphers. He opposed Scriptural 'literalists' such as Warburton, and argued that the Scriptures are like hieroglyphics, with an exoteric and an esoteric meaning: the latter only comprehensible to the spiritual initiate (ER, II pp. 135-6). For this 'clavis' tradition P. J. Korshin, Typologies (1982), p. 6.

20 Schwartz, Prophets, pp. 233- 42: 'The Scientists perceived themselves as initiates in an epoch when veils had begun to fall, and they found themselves participating in revelation'.

pointing to the restitution of all things'.[21] For Cheyne it was his 'own crazy carcase', and those of his nervous patients that provided the laboratory in which he could discover the key to the providential ordering of creation. After his breakdown he came to view the human body as a miniature theatre where (like God in his universal 'sensorium'), we may watch in microcosm the dialectical struggle between matter and spirit, between the dark and light principles within the original cosmic unity. His delicate nerves were the mechanical means through which his immaterial spirit read this embodied book of revelation.

## Desire

In the context of a discussion of English Romanticism, M. H. Abrams has remarked upon the increasing scholarly attention now being paid to the importance of Hermeticism in European Renaissance thought.[22] A Neo-Platonic, Christianised-Cabbalistic occult tradition passed down to later Romantic thinkers through certain seventeenth-century theorists, most notably Giordano Bruno and Jacob Boehme. Abrams describes Boehme's visionary formulation of a cosmic myth of the Fall from primal unity to sexual, material and mental division, as 'a remarkably subtle and extremely influential innovation upon the Christian form of the Neo-Platonic circle of emanation and return'.[23] This visionary interpretation of Genesis posits as the primal source of all nature an eternal and undifferentiated unity which is literally Nothing: the *Ungrund* or *Abyss*. Through an inner need or desire (*eine Sucht*), the *Ungrund* strives for self realisation and creates within itself an opposing force which sets the original unity into motion. The resulting 'wheel' or 'knot' (visually represented by the hermetic symbol for eternity, a snake with its tail in its mouth), produces 'Something' out of 'Nothing', and indeed is the source of all things. The origin of evil was initiated by the fall of Lucifer, which in turn led to the fall of Man and the rest of creation. Fallen man plunges deeper and deeper into the contrarieties of the material world by turning his appetites towards 'the creatures'. He only preserves a broken fragment of the original divine unity. It requires grace, given through Christ, to bring about restoration to the primary oneness.

By 1715, the gluttonous causes of his recent illness had inspired Cheyne to draw upon the highly anthropomorphic implications of Boehme's vision of a Divine thirst,

---

21 Impartial Account (1708), as quoted in Schwartz, Ibid., p. 238.

22 Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism pp. 160-163; Frances Yates, Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (Chicago, 1964).

23 Ibid., p. 161.

to make a profound analogy between human appetites (or Desire), and the millennial process of spiritual restoration. Through analogical correspondences between the divine and human attributes Cheyne suggests that the faculty of desire (or Willing), is the first principle of human psychology: '*Desire* is Infinite in its *Capacity*, the most *Cardinal*, most *Quick*, and *Sensible*, and most *Active* Faculty of the *Mind*...and the *Will*, and the *Affections* are but *Modifications* of it' (II, p. 67). As evidence for this assertion he lays strong emphasis upon quietist introspection and the self-examination of our own 'restless' existence:

> We need only reflect on the Source of all the Happiness or Misery of intelligent Beings, and we shall find it arises from the enjoyment or disappointment of their *Desires*. There is in all...a restless *Appetite* or *Desire* of Happiness: From the Moment of their Being, through all the Ages of eternity, all their *Labour*, and *Travel* [sic], is for this purpose: Nor are they devoid of it...for one instant of time, in all their endless *Duration* (II, p. 68).

If we come into possession of any object, then a greater object will always come into our view for 'no Object less than *Infinite* can satisfy' (Ibid.). Desire, Cheyne argues, is a devouring and ruling passion whose endless enjoyments and disappointments consume all our other mental faculties. Since desire is infinite, it cannot be satisfied or fulfilled by anything less than infinitude. When it is ultimately satisfied it must inevitably be infinitely happy and this can only be achieved when we focus our desire upon the only thing that can ultimately satisfy it, namely God.

This process of desire, fulfilment and revived thirst is an analogical representation of God's own self-willing and self-reflection which, according to Boehme, was the first act of creation. Cheyne's promotion of this concept to the status of a universal metaphysical truth stemmed from his own experiences of unusual mental states during his breakdown:

> To apprehend how infinitely Capacious, Active, and Sensible the desire is, we need only imagine our selves, separated from the Objects of Sense, and the present *Amusement* of *Life*, with all the Faculties of the Soul *awake*: And we shall then be able to conjecture, how *strong, Active, Restless,* and *Insatiable*, our Desires wou'd be. So as to swallow up, and extinguish, all the other *Acts* of the Faculties of the whole compound. Those only can most sensibly feel the force of this reasoning, who have in some measure, and for some time been in this State (II, pp. 68-9).

Cheyne's later writings all reveal this profound concern with what we might term the limits of consciousness. He used his experiences of abnormal mental states - dreaming, unconsciousness, derangement, acute pain and sensory deprivation - as 'thought experiments' which helped him to ponder, analyse and illustrate the nature of

consciousness itself.[24] By adopting the Behmenist conception of creation as a psychological act of introspection on the part of the Divine Unity, Cheyne gave a spiritual vitality to Newton's mechanistic attempt to give God qualities of spatial intimacy. By suggesting a common ground for psychological and theological truth he moves near to Blake and Coleridge.

A. J. Kuhn was one of the first scholars to note that Cheyne's use of Behmenism in the Principles, provided the non-juring theologian, William Law, with a model for the adoption of theosophical concepts of nature: 'for of course *desire* is the key spiritual and mechanical principle in the union of nature and grace in Boehme's theosophy'.[25] Cheyne's friendship with Law is discussed below, in Chapter 8. Cheyne's own immediate source (the works of Boehme apart), was a book he later introduced to Law (and others), namely Baron Wolf de Metternicht's Fides et Ratio Collatae ac suo utraque loco redditae adversus Principia Joannis Locki (Amsterdam, Wetstein, 1709).[26] The Baron was a German theosopher, and an associate of Lord Pitsligo, who was responsible for introducing Cheyne to this neglected but important Behmenist critical commentary on Locke. Poiret described the insatiable desire for good in his Preface to the English translation, Faith and Reason Compared; shewing that Divine Faith and Natural Reason proceed from two different and distinct Principles in Man against notions and errors of the Modern Rationalists (1713): 'Enjoy what we will outwardly we are yet ever wanting, and never satisfied; we may there discover an inward Spring, a secret principle of Truth, a most central and diffusive sense, an infinite and insatiable desire of Good' (p. xvi). In the book itself, Metternicht describes the introspective source of this awareness: 'If Man will attentively consider Himself, and a little more narrowly observe his own Motions, he cannot but find in his own Inward parts, a certain Central, as I may say, and a most Pasionate *Desire* of the Chiefest Good; such a *Desire* as cannot at any time, nor in any wise be extinguished' (p. 38). God, Poiret explains, is the only 'adequate Object' of the spirit 'without Him it can never be fill'd, nor satisfy'd, nor happy' (p. xxi).

As we have seen, the Behmenist account of the origination of good and evil, matter and spirit, was rooted in a process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. This 'triune' configuration (what Boehme termed, 'The Three Principles'), underlies all the other analogical correspondences between divine and human nature. In 1715, Cheyne adopted the 'Three Principles' in several of their most fundamental formulations.

---

[24] Cheyne made no modern distinctions between mind, thought, soul or spirit, all of which he defines throughout his writings in both qualitative and substantial terms in contra-distinction to body or matter.

[25] Kuhn, *Nature Spiritualized: Aspects of Anti-Newtonianism* in ELH 1974, p. 405.

[26] Stephen Hobhouse, *'Fides et Ratio': the book that introduced Jacob Boehme to William Law* Journal of Theological Studies xxxvii (1936), pp. 350-68, notes Cheyne's role.

Analogy, he suggests, shows that this triune derives from a '*pattern* and *Architype* in the Divine Nature' where we will inevitably find the ultimate source of this 'HOLY TERNARY'. The original quality in the Divine Nature is *Desire*: 'now this being supposed to belong to a *supremely infinite, intelligent Being*, must be infinitely *Active, Ardent, Strong*, and *Powerful Thought*...Now then this supremely infinite *Desire*, this *Active* and *Ardent Thirst* after Happiness, or after a full, plenary, and compleat, Beautifying object, we shall suppose to represent the Father, the *Original* and first *Principle* in the Divine Nature' (p. 81). As God has nothing but himself to contemplate and desire 'therefore *He-himself*, reflected in upon *Himself*, viewing and contemplating his own *infinite* Perfections'. This self-contemplation 'represents to us the *Begotten Deity*, the SON, the Second Divine *Principle* in the Order of the *Godhead'*. Out of this arises a joy, happiness, acquiescence and satisfaction, which 'shadow out to us the third and last, in Order, of these essential *Principles*, in this *mysterious Ternary*, to wit, the HOLY GHOST' (II, pp. 80). Although unorthodox, this notion of a triune of faculties in man which are analogous with the Holy Trinity was already something of a theological common-place by the time Cheyne wrote this, but his vocabulary here is distinctly Behmenist.[27] Thus, in contradistinction to the rigid dualism of many of his contemporaries, Cheyne sometimes approaches a dialectical concept of nature which was perhaps the most important contribution of the Behmenist tradition to later Romantic thought, but as John Hoyles has noted, Cheyne never fully accepted the more radical consequences of Boehme's dialectics.[28]

Cheyne also used theosophical dialectics to attempt to wed Newtonian concepts of physical space to analogically related metaphysical and psychological notions of plenitude and mental vacuity. Again this suggested a more dynamic and intimate theory of human and divine nature. To achieve this, he had to protect older hermetic concepts of analogy, correspondence and typology from the onslaught of Locke's empirical inheritance. Paradoxically, Cheyne's youthful immersion in Locke's introspective 'psychology' as employed in both The Essay on Understanding and On Education, meant that despite his mystical preoccupations, and inductive orientation

---

27 Writers with whose works we can be sure he was familiar include Augustine, Bonaventura, Ruysbroek and St John of the Cross (the latter being particularly popular amongst Garden's circle). See, for example, Augustine's De Trinitate 12.6 and 15.23. and the Confessions, 13.11. Cheyne was almost certainly already aware of Boehme's accounts of the Trinity in, for example, The Three Principles, (Sections, 22, 25, and 61), but again, Metternicht (and Poiret's commentary) probably provided the immediate source for his adoption of the idea. In chapter 8 it is shown how Cheyne's promotion of Behmenist concepts led to William Law developing a more radical anti-Newtonian theology in the 1740s.

28 Abrams Natural Supernaturalism (1971), pp. 160-3; P. L. Thorslev, Romantic Contraries (Yale,1984), Intro., and p. 64f. Hoyles, Waning of the Renaissance, pp 125-6.

of his analogical methodology, he maintained a strongly empirical approach to matters of human psychology. His theoretical concerns as an iatro-mechanist lent authority to this approach. as he became a theorist of what we might now term 'the psychology of religion'. Although Cheyne absorbed a traditional sentimental vocabulary of religious experience favoured by the mystical-pietists described above, he did not wholly jettison the mechanistic concepts of Newton's new physics and empirical basis of Locke's new 'psychology'. This compromise is seen clearly in the way Cheyne underpinned his pietist faith in a 'Universal Restoration' by equating spiritual 'Desire' with gravitational attraction.

**The Principle of Reunion**

Central to Cheyne's theodicy is an attempt to equate the Newtonian concept of gravitational attraction with an inherent psychological force or energy of 'Desire' (what Boehme had earlier termed, in the alchemical language of Paracelsus, 'attraction' or 'astringency'), in order to posit a universal law of spiritual attraction or reunion. This concept, to which Cheyne was to return throughout his popular medico-religious writings, is first posited in a notable addition to the original account of gravitation in the Principles (1705) (I, p.i ), but he gives a fuller account of the theory in Part II (1715):

> Something analogous to...[gravity] is the Spring and Mover...of all the noble and regular Actions of Spiritual Beings. God being the *sole sovereign, self-existent* and *Independent* Being, when he made Creatures partakers of himself, Images, Emanations, Effluxes and Streams out of his own Abyss of Being, could not but impress upon their most *intimate* Natures and Substance, a Central Tendency toward Himself, an Essential Principal of *Re-Union* with himself: which in him is a Principle of Attraction of them towards him (II, p. 47).

Although Cheyne could have derived this essentially Platonic concept of an innate attraction to God from any number of religious writers from Augustine to Guyon, there is a distinctly Behmenist colouring to his vocabulary. Again we need look no further than Poiret's introduction to the English Fides et Ratio to find his immediate inspiration. Here Poiret (explaining Metternicht), talks of 'that radical and infinite Desire of Good, or, to speak more properly...that innate and central Tendency (that centripetal *Vis* or Power to borrow an Expression, which I conceive I may as properly use with relation to the Spiritual as others do with regard to the material worlds), of the *Supreme* Spirit, to its proper Centre and Object, God'.[29] Cheyne's more rigourous faith in 'Divine Analogy' enabled him to adopt what for Poiret is an apologetic

---

29 Faith and Reason Compared (1713), Preface, p. lxii.

metaphor and turn it into a metaphysical reality. At the same time he replaces Poiret's Cartesian centripetal forces with Newton's newly formulated laws of gravitational attraction. This is typical of his method of adopting Neo-Platonic concepts familiar to Newton (who was after all a colleague of Henry More), and using them in a far more fanciful manner.

Cheyne defended his theory of spiritual attraction with intuitive 'psychological' evidence. The law of spiritual reunion explains the 'source of *natural Conscience*, and of all those Motions and Convulsions, that are raised in the Breasts of...intelligent Beings, upon the *Commission* or *Omission* of certain Actions: of that *Comfort, Joy*, and *Support*, in some; and of that *Dejection, Dread*, and *Terror* on the Minds of others'. Attraction also explains other extreme or abnormal mental conditions: 'Hence it is that *Scelerats*, can by no Arts nor any Amusements how violent soever stifle the Cries of a wounded conscience; hence also, it, that honest and upright Minds are sometimes swallow'd up, by a Tranquillity and Peace that surpasses Understanding' (II, p. 88). Both Cheyne's published account of his crisis and his private correspondence of 1708-9 confirm the degree to which he himself was 'convulsed' by pangs of dread, remorse and dejection, as well as thrown into raptures of joy by the extremes of repeated breakdown and recovery. Again, behind Cheyne's theoretical accommodations to a quasi-Newtonian theory of mystical attraction we detect the personal spiritual agonies of a proto-romantic visionary.

Bowles was apparently unaware of the specific sources of Cheyne's mysticism, but he has shown that making an analogy between gravitational forces and moral forces of social cohesion was fashionable around 1715. Addison, in the Spectator (18 July 1711), compares animal instinct to the principle of gravitation. The Newtonian theologian, Samuel Clarke was also playing with similar ideas in his famous Boyle Lectures. Even more pertinently, the Guardian (5 August, 1713), contains a protracted analogy between 'interparticulate' attraction in the universe and the forces binding society together which so resembles Cheyne's account of 'spiritual reunion', that his critic Dr Edward Strother, for one, mistakenly assumed it to have been Cheyne's work.[30] Significantly, this essay was the last of a dozen or so contributions to the Guardian made by Berkeley during his first stay in England between January and October 1713. The young immaterialist spent this period meeting 'men of merit', establishing close friendships with many of the London 'wits', including Cheyne's

---

30 E. Strother, An Essay on Sickness and Health...in which Dr Cheyne's Mistaken opinions in his Late Essay, are Occasionally taken Notice of (1725), p. 430. Strother was discussing Cheyne's account of 'spiritual attraction' in EH, Ch 6.

known intimates, Arbuthnot, Gay, and John Freind.[31] As Berkeley's notebooks show that he had already become critically engaged with the metaphysical arguments in Cheyne's Principles (1705), concerning the infinite divisibility of matter, a topic relevant to his endeavours to develop an immaterialist philosophy, it seems probable that he was introduced to their author.[32]

These more orthodox uses of the analogy with attraction must have encouraged Cheyne in his pervasive adoption of it as a metaphysical truth within a blatantly Behmenist theodicy. In particular he may have been familiar with its use, from as early as 1687, in the popular Neo-Platonic writings of John Norris of Bemerton. There is no direct evidence for Cheyne's personal contact with Norris, nor the circle of his adherents, most notably the 'Bluestockings', Lady Mary Chudleigh (1656-1710), Mary Astell (1666-1739), and Cudworth's daughter, Lady Masham (1658-1708), who propagated the cult of 'Platonick Love'. However, Cheyne's one surviving serious poem 'On Platonick Love' (see Appendix II), suggests his intellectual proximity to this circle.[33] By the time of his death, Cheyne had gathered around him a not dissimilar sentimental group of medico-millenarian 'Disciples', including a significant number of pious, intellectual women.

Whatever other influences were at work, we can be sure that by 1715 Cheyne was trying to give new scientific credence to a spiritual concept widely prevalent amongst Boehme's English and Continental followers. By 1709 Andrew Ramsay's mystical and scientific studies were prompting him to ponder notions of spiritual attraction similar to Cheyne's subsequent formulation. We have already quoted from Ramsay's

---

31 Guardian No. 126 appeared just after Berkeley's two-month stay at Oxford where he may have encountered Cheyne and/or the manuscript of the Principles, at the Tory stronghold Christ Church College where the physician had several close friends (A. Luce, The Life of...Berkeley (1949), pp. 56-68).

32 Notebook "B" entry 367 and the (later) entry in Notebook "A'", no. 459 (Works I). For Berkeley's critical interest in Cheyne's use of infinite divisibility see his unpublished paper *On Infinites*, (attributed to 1707-8), which quotes explicitly from the Principles (Works, IV, pp. 232-238). Cheyne never mentions Berkeley or immaterialism directly but the fact that he subscribed to Andrew Baxter's, Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul (1733), one of the earliest serious attempts to address Berkeley's ideas, suggests his familiarity with the metaphysical debate Berkeley generated in Edinburgh. Berkeley certainly read Cheyne's later works which provide a model for his own excursion into popular medico-philosophy, Siris (1744). Berkeley included two of Cheyne's mature works in the shipment of books he donated to Yale. He may have been encouraged in this by his wife Anne, who interestingly was a keen student of the mystics and associate of quietists (*Bishop Berkeley's Gift of Books in 1733* in Yale University Library Gazette, viii (July 1933), 1).

33 Cheyne's patient Ralph Allen, host to the literary circle at Prior Park in which the elderly Cheyne was a frequent guest, was a keen admirer of Norris. He owned Norris's Practical Treatise on Humility and the more abstruse, Malebranchian Essay Towards an Ideal of the Intelligible World. Cheyne betrays no knowledge of Malebranche (despite the similarities in their philosophy of religion), but his 'mystic' associate, Byrom, was a keen Malebranchian. For a particular relevant discussion of the Norris circle see Hoyles, Waning (1971), Ch. 8. For Allen, Benjamin Boyce, The Benevolent Man, p. 63.

brief exchanges with George Keith concerning spiritual reunion. A reply from Pitsligo in 1709 confirms that Ramsay freely discussed Philadelphian ideas with his friends, specifically the mystic notion, based upon a theory of spiritual reunion, that communication at a distance was possible between spiritually awakened individuals.[34] When Ramsay put the idea to Pitsligo the latter replied with the affectionately pragmatic comment that 'what you say as to the separation of our machines I think truely I feel the same sentiments, and indeed 'tis probable that distance of bodys may sometimes draw spirits nearer, but this has a platonick air, therfor if I had it for a wish would be content we were within half-a-hours walk of one another or yet nearer'.[35] Cheyne presumably also discussed Behmenist concepts with Ramsay and Pitsligo but regrettably nothing of such exchanges has survived. When he presented them in a Newtonian framework in 1715 they certainly had a 'platonick air', as Bowles and other modern scholars have since observed.[36]

Cheyne also argued that the principle of reunion also resolves the problem facing Christian philosophers who wish to acknowledge the moral virtue of their pagan forebears. An innate principle of spiritual reunion explains 'the *noble* and *sublime Discoveries* of the *antient Heathen Philosophers*, in the Principles of moral Virtues, without the assistance of Revelation' (II, p. 88). This may be Cheyne's direct response to Shaftesbury's similar, though deistical, account of a 'moral sense' in his influential 'Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit'.[37] There is no evidence that Cheyne read Shaftesbury, although the Characteristicks were being discussed by Pitsligo amongst others of Cheyne's associates from an early date. As G. S. Rousseau remarks, 'we are willing to acknowledge the influence of Shaftesbury as a Platonist and a Stoic, but not of a Cheyne, altogether different though his influence was'.[38] Indeed all Cheyne's popular works contain accounts of what he terms a spiritual or moral sense: 'There is in our Spiritual Nature inherent and innate a Moral Sense, and a *Natural sagacity*, as

---

34 Inevitably, this concept of a pious ESP was satirised by opponents. Cockburn in Bourignonism Detected. Narrative I (1698), comments: 'I was told, that at a distance betwixt London and Oxford, one frequently understood a fellow- member's Thoughts and Actions, without Letter or Speaking Trumpet, or any common way of Communicating' (p. 15). Lee and Roach promoted the concept: in the Philosophical Transactions of the Philadelphian Society (1697).

35 Pitsligo to Ramsay, 27 November 1709 (NLS 4796).

36 Ibid..

37 Characteristicks (1714), which opens by posing the problem of 'how far *Religion* necessarily implies *Virtue*; and whether it be a true Saying, That it is impossible for an Atheist to be Virtuous, or share any real degree of Honesty, or Merit' (Bk. I, Part III, I, ii).

38 *IDC*, p. 120. The common roots of both Cheyne and Shaftesbury's ideas in Continental pietism deserve further research: Shaftesbury actually lodged with Poiret's associate Benjamin Furley at Rotterdam.

well as natural Sensations. There are innate Ideas of God and Virtue, and of Moral *Good* and *Evil* in the Soul' (ER, pp. 245-6).

Cheyne's notion of spiritual attraction gave scientific (i.e., Newtonian) credibility to the idea that benevolence is a universally innate force, although he never addressed the consequences that his mechanistic formulation of this extremely optimistic concept has for practical ethics. Certainly he believed that his 'psychological' examples were proof enough of the reality of this underlying force, even though in our lapsed state it is frequently 'Obliterated...by contrary *Attractions*, by *Sensuality*, and the violent Amusements of Licentiousness'. Anticipating cynical critics, he asserts that its inconspicuousness is 'no more an Argument against its *essentially* belonging to intelligent Beings, than the *Ideotism* of some is an Argument against the Principle of Reason in humane Nature'. This merely illustrates the 'universal Degeneracy, and Corruption, of this set of intelligent Beings, from their *Primitive* and Original Institution' (II, p. 89).

With his doctrinal roots fixed firmly in the anti-Calvinist soil of Cambridge Platonism and Aberdonian Episcopalianism, Cheyne derived a optimistic and conveniently simple ethical system from his principle of spiritual attraction. Moral good and evil are defined respectively as whatever 'promotes or advances this *Reunion* (II, p. 91). He insists that we do not love God or his creatures because of the fear of rewards and punishments, but rather from a sense of God's 'original Excellencies and Perfections', or the abstracted perfection we see reflected in other beings. The New Testament shows that ultimately the love of God removes the need for rewards and punishments which are only 'an early, necessary means of inducement: there neither ever was, nor ever cou'd be, any room for *Contracts*, or *Pactions*, between the *supreme Being* and his intelligent Creatures, in the original Constitution of Things' (II, p. 96). It might be argued that it is impossible to love without some motive of reward or punishment, but Cheyne believes this objection arises out of ignorance of the workings of the soul. Love, he argues, belongs to the will, or 'unenlightened' faculty of the mind, rather than the understanding, and therefore naturally pays no regard to matters of reward or punishment: 'we *Love* because we will *Love*, without *Reasoning*, or because the Object of our *Love* is amiable, and not because it will hurt or heal us, Love is Blind, and belongs entirely to the *Will* and not to the *Intellect*' (II, p. 101).

Cheyne's appealing attempt to provide a scientific basis for the notion of an ultimately perfectible humanity and an all-benevolent deity found many willing, and in some cases, unlikely followers. After reading the Principles, even a New-England Calvinist like Cotton Mather could write (privately) that 'The Notion of our Soul

being formed with a Principle of *Re-Union to God* by Him originally implanted in it; if well cultivated, may prove of great use, first unto my own Soul, and then unto many others. Dr *Chienes* Reflections on this Matter, should be exquisitely considered'.[39] Mather must have been aware that in 1715, Cheyne was coming very close to publicly declaring what we know to have been his private belief in Universal Salvation. It was only later, in 1740, that he published his belief that spiritual attraction provided the mechanism for a millennial scheme of 'Universal Restoration'. But it is perhaps the broader impact of Cheyne's sentimental theology which is of interest to the student of literature. In particular, Cheyne's Principles, clearly indicate some of the common roots within Continental pietism of both popular doctrines of nervous sensibility, and the aesthetics and epistemology of Romanticism. This is seen most clearly if we consider Cheyne's critical and reactionary stance towards the epistemological assumptions of Locke and his followers.

**The 'Spiritual Sense'**

Behind Cheyne's attempt to give his optimistic theology a sound basis in natural philosophy, there lay a belief in personal revelation and a faith in the practical workings of the mystical 'doctrine of *naked faith* and *pure love*', which he derived from Guyon and Fenelon. For Cheyne, the sentimental ideal of 'Divine Love' was the ultimate basis of religious faith: '*Charity*, or the pure and disinterested *Love* of GOD and of all his *Images* in a proper Subordination is...the *Accomplishement* of all the *Graces*, and the consummate Perfection of Christianity' (p. 98). The *Principle of Reunion* describes the function of the spiritual desire which ultimately motivates all creatures to unite with their maker. It is 'an infinitely *active, quick*, and *sensible* Faculty' which when 'considered as a *Theological* Virtue' is Charity, or when considered as a rule of action, conscience' (Ibid.). Cheyne's vocabulary is suggestive. 'Active', 'Quick', and 'Sensible' are all qualities he was soon to promote as positively symptomatic of an acute, nervous sensibility to which he believed both himself and other pious intellectuals were susceptible. Freedom from nervous torments allows the spiritual element or 'spark' to respond to the first sentimental stirrings of conscience, to the first prompts of spiritual reunion, and to its innate 'Ardent thirst' for 'Naked faith and Pure Love'. We shall return to Cheyne's promotion of a pious doctrine of nervous sensibility later, but for the present it is worth considering how intrinsic it was to Cheyne's metaphysical and theological concerns.

---

39 Diary of Cotton Mather, II, p. 450.

The affective doctrine of *'Naked Faith and Pure Love* led Cheyne to abandon the cold, rationalism of the 'geometers' in favour of a philosophy of revelation. For Cheyne the human faculties were corrupted by the Fall: 'The *Powers* of the Body, are not only Finite, but very low in the Order of Finites'. Reason is fallible because it belongs to our fallen state. Our sensory organs are 'so contriv'd, as to perceive best the ordinary Effects of common Life, the Objects that necessity of Subsistence do most readily present us....what the conveniences of Life require' (II, p. 62-3). This limitation is clearly purposeful or else God would have given us greater sensory capacities. To these merely bodily capacities, we can add the more powerful, but still finite faculties of imagination, memory, and understanding. Cheyne accepted Locke's argument that 'all real Knowledge of material Things, is convey'd into the Understanding, through the Senses', but found it crucial to prove that we have the ability to communicate with the spiritual realm in order to unite with God. Consequently he insists that we must also possess 'a spiritual *Perception* and *spiritual Senses, Imagination and Understanding*' which are suited to the spiritual world of finite beings, and even more refined faculties or *'Divine Senses, perception, Imagination*, and *Understanding*, for communicating with the supreme Infinite' (II, pp. 103-4). This three-fold hierarchy of faculties, each designed to communicate with a different level of existence - material, spiritual, and divine - corresponds with the Scriptural accounts of mankind being composed of body, soul and spirit. It results in the traditional Christian distinction between an inward (spiritual) and outward (material or natural) man, which Cheyne firmly upheld.[40]

Cheyne almost certainly derived his conception of a 'Spiritual Sense' from Metternicht's critique of Locke. In fact, like Poiret and Metternicht, in 1715 Cheyne specifically set out to correct 'the Errors and Impieties' of the unholy Trinity of Spinoza, Hobbes and Locke.[41] Addressing 'the Mistakes of...the otherwise

---

[40] For Cheyne, the body and rational soul belong to the material system, and by exclusively following their dictates we act in opposition to those of the spirit which brings about our reunion with God. Hence the Scriptural opposition 'between *the Law of the Members* and the *Law of the Mind*' a saying, which summarises Cheyne's own personal dilemma of being torn between the conflicting 'attractions' of worldly and spiritual appetites. It became one of his favourite Biblical tropes in proselytising letters to patients (PP, II, p. 103-5).

[41] Ibid., II, p. 113: Spinoza's erroneous conception of the universe as 'a Kind of a Huge-brute-animal, actuated by a fatal, necessary, unintelligent, undesigning Principle', gets short shrift and is indeed addressed in Cheyne's original arguments against Epicurean and Democritian atomism in Part I. Predictably, Cheyne objects to Hobbes's failure to consider humanity in its 'present mixed state of probation and purification' but only in a 'Diabolical and Reprobated State: Not as Groaning under it's present State of Corruption; and waiting and panting for the glorious Liberty of the...Children of God; but as it will be in an habitual confirm'd Estate, of the Anarchy and rebellion of it's Faculties one against another'. For Cheyne, with his revelatory experience of recovering his faculties from their fallen 'anarchy' this was an inadequate account for there is hope of a return to a more paradisiacal,

*Ingenious*...Mr *Lock*', Cheyne is pleased that Locke does at least consider man as he now exists in a world composed of a mixture of natural good and evil, but his account is '*Lame* and *Imperfect*' because it fails to suggest that we are now in a fallen state, with our higher faculties buried under 'the Rubbish of his present Corruptions and Sensuality'. In short Locke (and his sceptical 'Disciples'), apply their rational analysis to,

> Subjects (to which Faculties are appropriated higher than those he *elicits* out of the mere lapsed State of humane Nature) of a more elevated Order (such as *Christianity* and its *Holy Mysteries, Faith, Grace, Divine Revelation*, and *Inspiration*, and the Means of Man's Recovery) and debase these into *mere heathenish Morals*, or *Humane Philosophy*, and sink the *Oeconomy of the whole Wisdom of the Godhead*, even below the poor Contrivances and barren Speculations of many of the *Gentile Sophists* (II, pp. II3-5).

The key to Cheyne's reactionary stance lies in his mature charge 'that Spiritual Sensations and Senses...are Realities, and not figures' (ER, p. 246). Cheyne spent his life resisting deists who attacked revelation by exploiting the inherent reductionism of Locke's epistemology of faith though he knew that an intuitive notion of a 'Spiritual Sense' ran counter to Locke's empiricist arguments against innate ideas. Whilst he agreed with Locke that when we are born our minds are a *Tabula Rasa*, he argued that this is simply owing to the circumstances of the material imprisonment of our souls. Cheyne argued that the divinely tuned faculties can too easily become confused, corrupted by worldly reason. An ideal balance must be cultivated between the three respective hierarchies of awareness, in an attempt to return to an ideal of primal mental order or harmony: 'The *Degeneracy, Corruption* and *Fall*, of the Humane Race...consists in the *Confusion, Discord, rebellion*, and *Contariety*, of these different and distinct Principles now with and against another; in throwing off that *due Subordination, Subjection*, and proper *Rank*, and Order, that was originally established among these Faculties'. Cheyne took a critical view of the ' *Anarchical* and rebellious State, of human Nature' (PP, p. 107). This traditional Christian doctrine of a pre-lapsarian harmony or sanity of the senses, informs Cheyne's career as a specialist in nervous illness at a deep level. It carries with it an implicit criticism of the activities of the French Prophets, whose bizarre physical and mental 'agitations' are, in this formulation, merely symptomatic of a post-lapsarian psychological rebellion and physical corruption:

> The Faculties belonging to the Material World presume to Judge of, and determine the Nature of the Subjects, belonging to the *Supreme* Spirit; takes the Government and Administration of

---

harmonious, spiritual existence. Cheyne's emphasis upon 'Desire' as the principle force in human activity forms part of his blatantly defensive attempt as a Christian to place Hobbesian man (his own unreformed self, ruled by his appetite), within a more optimistic providential framework.

> the whole Man, which properly belongs, in the Order of Nature, to this Third Principle, leads the other Principles, as *Slaves* and *Captives*, and forces them to comply with the practical *Dictates* they prescribe and deduce in their usurp'd Superiority (II, pp. 107-8).

This anarchic disruption of the material and spiritual senses produces visible effects upon outward nature which becomes 'Distorted, Inverted, and Corrupted'. Cheyne had experienced this civil war taking place within his own 'crazy carcase'. In his later works, Cheyne applied this metaphor of anarchy in almost equal measures to the distorted perceptions of free-thinkers, or the well intended but unhealthy practices of 'Enthusiasts'. In all these manifestations, Cheyne saw signs of millennial anticipation.

Cheyne believed that it is only after the mortification and purification appropriate to being a spiritual novitiate that one can aspire to an angelic communion with God. This does not manifest itself in fitful, anarchic behaviour. It is a quietist process of inner 'restoration'. Nervous disorders are a physical symptom of 'natural' rather than 'divine' man. The symptoms may prompt, as in his own case, reflection, purification and restoration, but they are not in themselves a state of grace. As he later argued, true spiritual enlightenment lies in the perfection of a primal inner balance: in returning the 'inmost senses, imagination, and Will [to] their primitive and original Constitution, in Subordination, *Harmony*, and Agreement, without Contrariety or Confusion, one with another'(ER, p. 106). Cheyne was to devote his life to promoting practical measures to bring about this restoration.

**Browne and Divine Analogy**

Some chronological anticipation is neccessary in order to contextualise Cheyne's contemporary place as a theologian. In 1732, Bishop Peter Browne published Things Divine and Supernatural Conceived by Analogy with Things Natural and Human (1732), where he introduces Cheyne as 'a learned and worthy Author, who hath said more upon this Subject of Analogy than any I have yet seen among our English Writers' (p. 113). Browne's work (known by its running-title 'Divine Analogy'), formed a significant part of a prolonged debate on analogy to which both Dialogue IV of Berkeley's Alciphron (1732), and Butler's famous Analogy of Religion (1736), now stand as the best known contributions. Browne's hitherto neglected lengthy discussion of Cheyne's philosophical and theological ideas deserves consideration. In Alciphron Berkeley had criticised the use made of arguments from analogy by his Irish colleague, Browne, in his Proceedure, Extent, and Limits of the Human Understanding (1728). This was itself a response to Archbishop King's negative use of analogy in his De Origine Mali (1702, translated 1715), and ultimately to the

sceptical tendencies of Toland and other freethinking followers of Locke.[42] In the Procedure, paying reluctant respect to Locke, Browne tried to use Locke's empirical methods to rescue the analogical defence of revealed religion from the onslaughts of scepticism; a strategy popular amongst Augustan Latitudinarians. When Berkeley's Alciphron appeared, Browne's *Divine Analogy,* a more detailed study, was already in the press, but he quickly appended an extra chapter (VIII), in response to Berkeley's criticisms.

In the opening chapter of this work, Browne repeated his earlier arguments for making a distinction between metaphor and analogy, a distinction to which Cheyne paid little regard. Browne's prolix attempt at an empirical analysis of the epistemological, theological, moral and linguistic ramifications of the analogical argument need not concern us here. However, his discussion includes a survey of both ancient and modern authorities which stretches from Quintillian to Aquinas, and from Locke to Clarke, and other contemporaries including Cheyne. The flattering tone with which he introduces his account of Cheyne's 'Principles' is soon dropped as he launches into a number of related criticisms. Cheyne is 'a Person of a soaring and elevated Genius; who could he have been contented with walking upon the Ground in the search of Truth, might have outgone all his Contemporaries, and not have come behind even the Antients of his Profession'. Unfortunately he has thrown away his talents by his 'too lofty and frequent Flights of Imagination', and his 'being too often upon the Wing in abstracted *Supermechanical* Reasonings' when dealing with matters which depend upon empirical evidence. By deducing consequences relating to the invisible spiritual realms quite independently of all 'conceptions of things Worldly and Human', Cheyne has 'retarded his Course, and Given to others those Advantages which Nature designed for him':[43]

> Alas! This fond prevailing Ambition of thinking Man; and this straining of the Mind till it seemingly exerts its Faculties and Operations beyond its self, is no other than throwing it into

---

42 Winnett, Bishop Browne, Metaphysician (1974). passim.

43 PP, II, p. 113. Browne accuses Cheyne of 'sucking in' Locke's ideas 'with his Mother's Milk at the University; who was herself, with the rest of her Sisters, about that Time unhappily poysoned by an Essay Concerning Human Understanding: Which appeared indeed in the Beauties of Style and Wit, and Language; but all this was the Glittering of the Serpent, to palliate and disguise a long Series of false Principles of Knowledge, directly destructive of revealed Religion' (pp. 127-8). Pointing to the Lockeian origins of the cone image, Browne objects that it 'carries with it an ugly Implication' that the scale of creatures form 'one common Mass, an hardly distinguishable Heap of the one universal, similar, uniform Substance': a 'Huddle of Beings' thrown together by chance and necessity, rather than by a divinely ordered and fixed hierarchy. This implication promotes atheism: 'it would have served Spinoza's Turn well, as if he had considered the whole System of Things as an Huge, Animated-Cone, or as an Huge-Monstrous, - Anything Else' (p. 126). It is ironic that Cheyne should be accused of promoting what he set out to oppose.

> *Convulsions*, which tho' they carry an Appearance of Strength and Vigor beyond what is natural, yet never fails to end in extreme fainting and weakness (p. 52 ).

This physiological metaphor barely veils an implicit criticism of Cheyne's reputed sympathies with enthusiasts. In fact Browne sets out in Chapter I to defend the use of analogy against, on the one hand, the scepticism of freethinkers and deists and on the other the equally damaging misconceptions of mystics and enthusiasts. Browne specifically includes Cheyne in his survey of 'the Moderns', as an unfortunate representative of someone seduced into unorthodoxy by the latter group. It is surely not a coincidence that Browne's discussion of Cheyne follows on from a similar critique of Reflections on Reason (1722), a popular theosophical work by John Hildrop, in which Cheyne is directly quoted.[44]

Browne's attitude to mysticism is made clear early in his book when he discusses the pietist notion that knowledge of God is made possible by 'a Ray from God let into our Souls: which gives us clearer or less distinct perceptions of the Divine Nature and things of another World, according to the increase of Grace and permanent Operations of the Holy Spirit within us' (p. 19). This is precisely that 'spiritual sense' proposed by Cheyne and his theosophical and quietist associates in defiance of Locke's reductionism. Browne continues:

> *Mystical* Divines carry on to such an intimate *Union* and Conversation with God and all things Spiritual as is not to be performed but by a suspension of all the Operations of sense and Reason. This a very elevated Genius of that strain describes by such a *simple Intuition* of the *Abyss* of Deity...your *Enthusiasts* of a lower Rank, with more Ignorance and Confidence, and much less mixture of sincerity and true Religion, do carry on yet further: And arrogate to themselves a *Direct* and familiar intercourse with the very *Nature* of God and Spiritual Things: and such an *Immediate View* of them by an *Inward Light* from heaven in the Mind, as renders the use of all Sensations and reasoning vain and unnecessary (p. 19).

Browne pays some reluctant respect to Boehme's 'elevated Genius', which is clearly recognised as a principle inspiration for both Cheyne and Hildrop's brand of mysticism, which he carefully distinguishes from that of other 'lower rank' enthusiasts who make wilder claims to spiritual powers. Nevertheless, Browne condemns Hildrop's claim that 'we have vital Spiritual Perceptions, and Tastes, and Views of God and invisible Things, by the help of inward Spiritual senses, capable of infinite Perception', as 'all *Cant* and *Enthusiasm, Jargon*, and *Nonsense*' (p. 110.).

---

[44] Hildrop's Reflections on Reason (1722, reference to 3rd ed. 1729), lifts passages directly from Cheyne and Metternicht on 'the spiritual sense' etc. (esp. p. 119 ff.). I can trace little of the personal connections between Cheyne and the journalist John Hildrop (d. 1756), but significantly, during the 1730s, Hildrop wrote for The Weekly Miscellany, a journal Cheyne patronised and received *gratis* from Samuel Richardson, its printer and part-editor. I suspect that Hildrop encountered the mystics at St John's College, Oxford as an associate of the Philadelphian, Francis Lee (DNB, IX, p. 837.)

Cheyne addressed Browne's criticisms when he returned to a discussion of 'Spiritual Analogy' and 'Spiritual Nature' in his *Conjectures,* attached to An Essay on Regimen (1740). Defiantly self-conscious of being regarded by some as an enthusiastic romancer, he defends his imaginative forays into metaphysics on the grounds that scientific exactitude is subordinate to the spiritually therapeutic aims of sentimental piety: 'My whole Design is to help honest and sincere Persons to some Ideal Knowledge (which at best is but a poor affair) that may possibly comfort and mend the *Heart*, without hurting the *Head*'.[45] Cheyne only addressed himself seriously to Browne's one charge that he blurs the distinctions between material and spiritual substances. This was a particularly sensitive topic for Cheyne, whose desire to keep the creaturely world charged with divine energy, constantly brought him uncomfortably close to an heretical pantheism. In countering Browne's charge he resorts to a Gnostic or theosophical theory of an underlying dialectical struggle within nature, and talks confusedly of a 'necessary energy, action and reaction' within substances analogous with 'the Good and Evil principle in the *Manichean system*'.[46]

Cheyne remained undaunted about using analogy as an imaginative tool for spiritual insight and knowledge. Indeed, by 1740, an unapologetic Cheyne was happy to make analogy provide the 'key' to understanding the whole secret of nature in a visionary theodicy which includes metempsychosis, 'Primitive Creation Bodies', Angelic hierarchies, 'Astral Vehicles', planetary purgatories, and an implanted imaginative fecundity (see Chapter 9). Cheyne's exchange with Browne shows analogical arguments coming under increased pressure from empirical analysis, but it also suggests that, in 1733, the tradition represented by Cheyne and Hildrop was one to which an aspiring theologian felt obliged to address himself. Their supposedly anachronistic, promiscuous use of analogy, formed an integral part of a contemporary debate which deeply informed metaphysical, theological and aesthetic theories. As we shall see, when Cheyne rose to what can only be described as cult status during the 1720s and 30s, he became a prominent figure in the dialogue between what John Hoyles has usefully juxtaposed as the 'upholders of Light and...Enlightenment'.[47]

---

45 ER, p. v., II, p. 43., and p. 18.

46 ER, II, p. Again he tries to rescue himself from unorthodoxy by arguing that since all substances are ultimately derived from God, we must substitute the term 'contrariety' for 'contradictory'. He thus rescues nature from being merely a battle-ground of good and evil envisaged by the Gnostics.

47 Wan ing, Intro., and p. 82 (terms derived from R. Coles).

# 6

# 'OF SANITY AND LONGEVITY': 1712-1730

'Fine Folks use their Physicians, as they do their Laundresses, send their Linen to them to be cleaned, in order only to be dirtied again'. (Cheyne, *Essay of Health*)

## 'This Universal Infirmary'

After bringing Cheyne's biography forward to 1730, this chapter examines his popular medical writings of the 1720s and the sentimental cult they prompted amongst their author's literary patients. Biographically, we catch mere glimpses of Cheyne during the decade immediately before his emergence into fashionable controversy with the publication of his Essay of Health and Long Life (1724). Everything points to a period during which the relative stability of his health allowed him to establish his medical practice at both London and Bath.

Settled in England, Cheyne continued the social patterns of his earlier attachment to the patrician scientific-literary circle of Pitcairne. Despite his breakdown, he remained a respected member of literary, scientific and political circles, even if his religous zeal meant that he was seen as a little eccentric by some freethinkers. Sir Hans Sloane's early patronage did not diminish with the years. They consulted over shared cases, as when Cheyne's kinsman, Bishop Burnet, was taken gravely ill in 1714.[1] By the early 1720s, Cheyne was being consulted by many members of the Court, by the minor gentry and by the rich mercantile class. With his eventual removal to Bath, and his developing specialist interest in nervous disorders, Cheyne did not sink into social obscurity, but kept in touch with London through a prestigious circle of influential patients, who put themselves under his care during what, for many, were seasonal health-seeking visits to Somerset.

Cheyne first visited Bath shortly after his arrival in England, probably in the company of one of his Scottish patrons. He was there for the sake of his own health by 1706-7. Dr Keith's letters to Lord Deskford confirm that from at least 1708 until 1718, Cheyne annually left London about the first week of May, and spent the 'Season' at Bath, returning to the capital in early October. The date of his permanent

---

[1] The Bishop's son recorded: 'In March 1714-5...[Bishop Burnet]...was taken ill of a violent cold, which soon turned to a pleuritic fever: he was attended in it by his worthy friend and relation Dr Cheyne, who treated him with the utmost care and skill; but finding that the distemper grew to a height which seemed to baffle all remedies, he called for the assistance of Sr. Hans Sloane, and Dr Mead, who quickly found his case desperate' (Burnet, His Own Times, II, p. 319).

removal to Somerset has been the subject of numerous inaccurate statements, but Keith wrote to Deskford in May 1718, that Cheyne had just written to him from Bath to say that 'he has for ever bid adieu to London.'[2] Keith was unconvinced, adding, 'but I believe he must alter his mind'. Nevertheless he makes no further allusions to Cheyne's annual movements. Cheyne apparently kept to his promise until 1725, when a second major crisis in his health, to be discussed later, prompted a temporary return to London.

Cheyne's permanent move to Bath was probably a sign of professional success, but it may also have been, in part, precipitated by a desire to have his children raised in the healthful air of Somerset. Around 1714-15, he married a Scotswoman, Margaret Middleton.[3] We know very little of Margaret, except that she aided her husband's practice by making domestic arrangements for visiting patients. She was liked by many, including Samuel Richardson, to whom her husband remarked that amongst his 'female family', his wife was, 'from her Cradle notoriously abstemious from better Principles than mere natural health'.[4] This 'female family' included two daughters, Ffrances and Margaret. the youngest (called 'Peggy', to distinguish her from her mother, 'Peg'), inherited her father's nervous weakness and was paraded as an exemplary practitioner of his dietary disciplines.[5] She became a great admirer of Samuel Richardson, who drew her into his own 'female family' of intimate women friends with whom he discussed the writing of his novels. The Cheyne sisters had an elder brother, John, who died in relative obscurity as the Vicar of Brigstock, Northampton, on 30 April, 1768.[6]

Margaret Cheyne's family background confirms her husband's continued ties with the Jacobite-Episcopalian tradition of Aberdeenshire. She was the daugher of the non-juring minister and theological controversialist, Patrick Middleton (1662-1736), a champion of Episcopacy and the House of Stuart. In 1689, in what was to be only the first of many similar clashes with the established Presbyterian Kirk, he lost the

---

[2] Henderson, Mystics, p. 160. The tendecy for scholars to have Cheyne permanently at Bath as early as 1706, seems to reflect a desire to account for his purported intellectual eccentricity with a simplistic notion of parochialism.

[3] The 'Helen Middleton of Henderson's Land', Edinburgh, through whom Cheyne forwarded some of his letters to amsay in 1708-10, was perhaps his future wife's sister. The exact date of Cheyne's marriage is untraced. The earliest extant reference to his 'spouse', is in a letter of Keith's dated 4 August, 1715 (Henderson, Mystics, p. 105).

[4] Mullett, Letters, LIV, p. 82.

[5] Cheyne made special provisions for his unmarried daughter, Peggy, in his Will: 'my daugher Margaret has been long ailing and valetudinary and in a very low state of health and may therefore want many supports and neccesarys which the stronger and more healthy want not'. Ffrances married William Stuart, advocate and King's Remembrancer, on 30 April, 1741 (Prob. II, 727; Viets, p. 448).

[6] GM, 1768.

ministry of Leslie, near Kirkcaldy, Fife, for holding prayers for James VII.[7] Middleton died at Bristol, where his son, Dr John Middleton, was an established physician and man-midwife, working in close association with his brother-in-law, George Cheyne.[8]

We do not know if Cheyne privately shared his Father-in-law's anti-Hanoverian sentiments, but if he did, it did not deter him from enjoying the patronage of many leading Court Whigs. Perhaps one of the most famous of Cheyne's cases during this period was Catherine Walpole, daughter of Sir Robert. A series of letters addressed from Cheyne at Bath to Sloane in London of 1719-20, give a harrowing account of Cheyne's vain attempts to halt her premature death.[9] They also reveal his intimacy with another courtier, Francis, IInd Earl of Godolphin, with whom he was 'out of town' for a week in November, 1720. Despite Cheyne's criticism of *Luxury*, he was happy to exploit his position as physician to Lady Chandos to gain the patronage of her wealthy husband, the Whig magnate, Lord Chandos (whom many supposed was the model for Pope's *Timon*). In the late 1720s, Cheyne used his high position in Bath civic society to promote the Duke of Chandos's secret land speculation schemes. These included the development of Chandos Buildings, Bath, which the Duke undertook so that his family and friends could enjoy luxurious lodgings whilst taking their seasonal cures. It was clearly in Cheyne's professional interest to promote such commercial developments. For his trouble, in this instance, he was rewarded with both recommendations of his practice, and the offer to put his nephew (Alexander Cheyne), through Charterhouse.[10]

The dating of Cheyne's permanent residence in Bath to about 1718-19 is corroborated by the fact that, in the early 1720s, he became more actively involved in local Bath affairs. His influence upon the physical landscape of Bath was not, however, always so mercenary as in the Chandos land schemes. The extent to which he became a leading citizen of the resort during the 1720s and 30s, is illustrated by his hitherto neglected role in founding the General Hospital (now the Royal National

---

[7] In 1692, he was discharged from exercising any clerical duties because he refused to hold prayers for William and Mary, but in 1716 he was keeping an unlicensed meeting house in Skinner's Close, Edinburgh, at which he refused to pray for George I. This led to another court-case, in which he was forbidden to preach or undertake any part of his ministry. He published a number of religious works suporting episcopacy, the most substantial of which was An Inquiry into the Outward Call of the Holy Ministry (Cambridge, 1741), ed. posthumously by his son (DNB, XIII, p. 356).

[8] Through his marriage, Cheyne may have become related to the Gardens. Dr Middleton's brother, George, a goldsmith and broker resident in the Strand, frequently handled Cheyne's finances and was one of his named executors. The Bristol circle of Middleton is described below in Chapter 8.

[9] BL, Sloane MS 4034, f. 317-48.

[10] Chandos to Cheyne from Letterbooks in Huntington Library, California (microfilm copies, Bath Central Library).

Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases). Cheyne's name first appears in connection with this charitable venture on a list of trustees to a fund drawn up to raise money for the projected scheme at a meeting held on October 2, 1723.[11] By 1723 Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls, was raising subscriptions for this fund, probably at Cheyne's prompting, for Sir Joseph was his patient and shortly to be the dedicatee of An Essay of Health. It was not until May of 1731 that Robert Gay, M. P. for Bath, was applied to for the purchase of some land. On April 29, 1731 the trustees drew up official plans which were made public in the following autumn. This list reveals the circle of city fathers within which Cheyne already moved. Alongside 'the Mayor, the two Justices and the Minister of Bath...Charles Bave M. P', Cheyne's name heads a list of three local physicians, above William Oliver (of biscuit fame), and Edward Harrington who are followed by various other local dignitaries.[12]

In 1737, following Walpole's suppression of the playhouses and with the deal with Robert Gay having fallen through, the trustees bought the Playhouse Theatre and cleared the site. Cheyne, who was not averse to reading plays at home, but objected to the popular theatre on moral grounds, probably saw a certain natural justice in this re-development. His name appears again on a subscription list 'For the Raising the Sum of Six Thousand pounds for Erecting a General Hospital etc. at Bath', dated February 16, 1737. Although he did not sign any of the official letters transcribed into the Hospital Committee Books of the 1730s, he is listed, second below Beau (Richard) Nash, in the first of these ledgers as a surviving member of an original committee of trustees from November 18, 1728.[13] The building of the hospital was eventually completed by 1742. To become a Governor, Cheyne must have donated at least £80, but since he played a leading role, he probably contributed much more than this over the years, both personally and by procuring subscriptions from his wealthy patients.

The other names associated with the Hospital form a convenient catalogue of the prominent local figures who were in Cheyne's immediate social-circle. They include Cheyne's publisher, the Bath bookseller James Leake (Samuel Richardson's brother-in-law) and the quarry owner and post-master, Ralph Allen (Pope's 'Man of Ross' and Fielding's model for Squire Allworthy), into whose literary circle at Prior Park Cheyne became a frequent guest.[14] The names of his old colleague, Dr Freind, and his

---

11 The principal published source for the founding of the hospital is the account of the Bath architect John Wood (the elder) in his Essay Towards a Description of Bath (1742). I have been unable to locate a copy of the first edition. References are to the second, of 1749.

12 Wood, III, p. 286.

13 *Book of the Copy Letters of the Trustees of the New General Hospital*, Volume I', Archive of the Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath.

14 Boyce, The Benevolent Man (1967), passim.

associate, Dr David Hartley, also appear alongside that of Beau Nash, the leading figure in Bath's fashionable world with whom Cheyne was to exchange banter. In February of 1739, Samuel Richardson, whom Cheyne introduced into Allen's circle, contributed to the hospital venture by placing advertisements for subscriptions in leading journals.[15] By 1741, Cheyne was telling the novelist that he had obtained a verbal promise from Pope that he 'would turn the Psalms into Proper poetry and Spiritual Hymns...to sell them at a Shilling apiece and give the Income to some universal charity'.[16] Richardson, probably correctly, assumed this was 'your General Infirmary'.[17] Despite his open hostility to the mysticism of Cheyne's circle, Bishop William Warburton, who met Cheyne at Prior Park, records the physician's prominent role in the founding of the hospital in a published sermon entitled A Short Account of the Nature, Rise and Progress of the General Hospital at Bath (1743).

**An Essay on the Gout**

Cheyne's reputation as a leading Bath physician was greatly enhanced by the success of his first wholly new work for fifteen years, a short treatise entitled Observations Concerning the Nature and Due Method of Treating the Gout...together with An Account of the Nature and Qualities of the Bath Waters (1720). This piece had all the ingredients for becoming a contemporary medical best-seller. Originally penned as a private paper of instruction for the author's patient, Colonel Richard Tennison, and dated 'Bath, July 1719', Cheyne recorded that it represented an 'abstract' of a larger work written in 1712. Concerned with two fashionable topics, the Gout and the medicinal virtues of spa-water, the Essay avoids the philosophical and theoretical obscurities of his earlier works and thus marks a distinct departure in Cheyne's publishing career as the first of his books to deliberately address a lay readership.

It is probably no mere coincidence that the book appeared within two years of Cheyne's permanent removal to Bath, as it was a successful attempt to advertise his particular clinical methods. A second edition appeared in the same year, somewhat

---

15 Richardson to Allen, 6 February, 1739, Bath Hospital Archive.

16 Mullett Letters, 65. Pope bequeathed Ralph Allen £150 in return for a loan made 'partly for my own and partly for Charitable uses', suggesting that 'if he refuse to take this himself, I desire him to employ it in a way I am persuaded he will not dislike, to the benefit of the Bath Hospital'. Pope, Prose, II, p. 507.

17 Cheyne emphasised that this was a secret, but told Richardson that Pope had already completed 'the two first...at my Desire to Admiration'. They are not extant. Warburton (?) told Richardson that Pope 'never had such an Intention' and 'would not have succeeded in it'. Richardson thought Pope would have been far better employed at this than 'exposing Insects of a Day' in the vitriolic Dunciad (Carroll, p. 57).

enlarged, with the amended title An Essay On the Gout, with an Account of the Nature and Qualities of the Bath Waters. In 1721, a third amended version appeared under the same title, with the addition of 'an Essay on the Nature and Cure of Chronical Distempers', in which form it ran to many editions.[18] Its lasting value was asserted by Dr Johnson: when asked for his opinion of Dr Cadogan's Dissertation on the Gout (1771), he told Lady Macleod that in so far as it recommended temperance and exercise 'it is only Cheyne's book told in a new way; and there should come out such a book every thirty years, dressed up in the mode of the times'.[19] Cheyne's ability to dress piety up in a 'modish' literary garb is a clue to his general popularity and Johnson's defensive interest in him as an exemplary medical author. If only as a temporary fashion, many readers responded positively to Cheyne's call for simplicity and temperance. His place as Bath's most fashionable and controversial physician was confirmed, but with opinion sharply divided between disciples and critics over what they saw as his radical pronouncements on personal dietary management. Whilst many acknowledged the moral value of Cheyne's popular approach, at least one of Cheyne's professional contemporaries, Dr Robert Hale, in the first of numerous condemnations of Cheyne's methods, was dismissing An Essay on Gout as a piece of hack work carried out merely for pecuniary motives.[20]

The importance of An Essay of Gout within the general development of Cheyne's theoretical and clinical practice has been outlined by Anita Guerrini, so that little need be said, in the present context, regarding what is essentially a practical account of treatment.[21] However, it opens with a sort of manifesto of the 'moral medicine' he formulated after his breakdown:[22]

> I have often observed with Admiration, the Wisdom and Goodness of Providence, in furnishing so wonderful an Antidote to almost all the Chronical Distempers of the English Constitution and Climate, which are chiefly owing to Errors of Diet, or rather, as a sacred Writer expresses it, To Idleness and Fulness of Bread. The Rankness of the Soil; the Richness of the Provisions; the Liveing so much on Flesh-Meats; the Inconstancy of the Weather, and

---

18 10th, 1753. He published it to confound the activities of 'Pyrating Booksellers'; an unauthorised Dublin edition did appear in 1721.

19 He added critically that Cadogan was foolish for 'maintaining that the gout is not hereditary (as Cheyne does), and that one fit of it when gone, is like a fever when gone' (Boswell, Life, V, p. 210).

20 Hale writes to Dr Charlett, that 'Dr Cheyns book wee look on as a 2 week fill putt out for patients'. Along with Mead and Sloane, Hale had no intention of abandoning 'strong wine' (Bod., Ballard MSS 24, f. 149).

21 Guerrini, *Isaac Newton, etc* (1989), pp. 239-40.

22 Establishing Cheyne's place in this beleanological tradition must be left for medical historians. In 1720, there were already many authorities for Cheyne to follow, but in his 'advertisement to the reader', Cheyne makes few excuses for the fact that he has not consulted any of these previous works. In 1719 he refers to his present position of being 'without my books, and confined to bounds', which indicates that he had not moved his London library to Bath and was once again suffering a relapse in his health.

> the Indulging in sedentary Amusements, or Speculative Studies, directly leading thereto. To remedy all which kind Heaven has provided Bath Waters as the most sovereign restorative in the Weaknesses of the Concoctive Powers (p. vi.).

Cheyne applies the precepts of physico-theology to a litany against 'Luxury' he was to repeat and expand throughout his subsequent popular works. This theme is treated more broadly in An Essay of Health and Long Life (1724), specifically applied to nervous disorders in The English Malady (1733), and placed within a millenarian context in the two mature works, An Essay on Regimen (1740), and The Natural Method (1742), composed during the 1730s. In 1720 he concludes with a short sermon that effectually summarises this concern with the spiritual and intellectual effects of conspicuous consumption:

> It is only the *Rich* the *Lazy* the *Voluptuous* who suffer most by the *Gout*: (I mean *Aquir'd Gouts*, and those hereditary ones enrag'd by *Luxury*) so those only, who have spent their Life-time under Tortures best can tell, what astonishing Miseries *Wealth* and *Vice* bring upon Human Kind! When the *Gouty* Humour has seiz'd upon all the *Noble Principles* of Life, when it has broken, subdu'd and obstructed all the *fine Pipes*, and slender Passages, in whose Openness and Soundness all the *Exquisite Sensations*, all the *Delicate Usages* of the *Animal Faculties* consist. When nothing but Pain, and melancholy, frightful Ideas, horrible Dreams, and Black Despair remain; who wou'd not have parted with the *Richest Delicacies*, the most *Delicious Wines*, the most *Enticing Vices*, for a plain, simple Diet, an useful, labourious Life, Freedom from Pain, and a good *Conscience*? TEMPERANCE only, Divine, Innocent, Indolent and Joyous *Temperance* can Cure or effectually Relieve the *Gout* (pp. 97-8).

Cheyne expresses this traditional Christian moral lesson through the language of iatro-mechanical physiology. He concentrates upon the mental torments that result from intemperance, drawing a vivid contrast between the physical pleasures of the flesh and the resultant loss of more refined mental pleasures. The quietist tradition in particular encouraged this emphasis upon the superiority of mental or intellectual pleasures over and above merely appetitive, animal ones. In this work we see the first indications of Cheyne's move towards a 'moral medicine', in which he was as much concerned with ethics as enemas, and through which he sought to ease the burdens of the mind as much as the body.

Cheyne's emergence from whatever immediate social isolation followed his breakdown, and his success at Bath, was undercut by some profound social and personal tensions which affected the nature of both his professional and intellectual career. Although by the 1720s Cheyne's name had become inextricably linked with Bath, the pious physician had a paradoxical relationship with this fashionable, provincial capital where he found lasting fame as controversial 'nerve-doctor', author, and philanthropist. Bath's expansion as a Hanoverian health resort was underpinned by a consumerist ethos. A place traditionally associated with healing was burgeoning

into a playground of public assemblies, material consumption and sexual intrigue.[23] The contrast was noted by Daniel DeFoe, who after visiting Bath around 1720, wrote of the modern 'gallantry and diversions of the place', remarking on the rapidly changing character of a city that was formerly the resort of cripples: 'But now we may say it is the resort of the sound, rather than the sick; the bathing is made more a sport and diversion, then a physical prescription for health; the town is taken up by raffling, gaming, visiting, and in a word all sorts of gallantry and levity'.[24] Although professionally dependent upon this commercial development, Cheyne's conservative religious concerns ran counter to this materialist, appetitive ethos, and forced him to be openly critical of the *Luxury* and infidelity associated with this boom.

Cheyne was far from unaware of the inherent paradox in his position whereby the social pressures of being a physician to the *beau monde* was likely to undermine his ascetic resolves regarding his own personal struggles to control his bodily appetites. It has already been noted that Cheyne's need to forge a metaphysics emphasising the opposing dialectical pull of divine and worldly forces of desire, was part of a practical need to reach an intellectual and moral compromise in the midst of these perhaps ultimately unreconcilable antitheses. Lurching between the secular and the religious, the social and the secluded, Cheyne was constantly half-apologising for his obvious enthusiasms, in an attempt to maintain his creed within a frequently hostile world of commercial interest and libertine social satire. These tensions were to continue to shape Cheyne's career as his cult status soared from the late 1720s onwards.

## An Essay of Health and Long Life

Cheyne's most influential medical work appeared in 1724 as An Essay of Health and Long Life. Published by the newly established Bath bookseller James Leake, the essay was immensely popular, reaching a seventh edition in 1725. Samuel Richardson, as Leake's brother-in-law, printed an eighth edition in 1734, and it reached a tenth by 1745. A close friend of Cheyne's own brother-in-law, the Aberdonian M.D., the Revd. John Robertson (also Cheyne's medical 'disciple'), was engaged to translate the essay into Latin for the Continental market where it appeared in 1725 as Tractatus de Infirmorum Sanitate Tuenda, Vitaque Producenda. A French

---

[23] R. S. Neale's study of Bath's expansion Bath 1680-1850: A Social History expresses this tension in its subtitle, 'A vale of pleasure but a den of iniquity', a descriptive quotation from a contemporary anonymous verse. Also consulted, Barbara B. Schnorrenberg, *Medical Men of Bath*, in Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture, 13, (1984), pp. 189-203.

[24] DeFoe, Tour (1724-6), pp. 359-60. He complains of 'love-making' between the mixed bathers and the coach rides upon the King's Down where Cheyne himself took daily horse-rides for his health.

translation appeared at Brussels in 1726 and at Paris in 1725 and 1742 (annotated by Clifton Winteringham M.D.), and it was read by, amongst others, Voltaire.[25] Throughout the century, extracts and other translations appeared, and as late as 1813 it was being reprinted in New York.[26]

Cheyne's first full exposition of his moral philosophy of health amounts to a complete guide to living. Numerous contemporary anecdotes, satires and professional responses attest to the fact that with its practical prescriptions for a temperate, vegetarian 'Regimen', the Essay became a *cause célèbre*. Cheyne discusses all aspects of preventive medicine under the traditional, if misleading headings of the six 'Non-Naturals', namely 'of Air', 'of Meat and Drink', 'of Sleeping and Watching', 'of Exercise and Quiet','of Evacuations', and 'of the Passions'.[27] These divisions later provided a model for Dr John Armstrong's popular didactic poem, *The Art of Preserving Health* (1744), which is essentially Cheyne's Essay versified. The important role of self-management in Cheyne's medical doctrine is suggested by the fact that the Essay began as private 'Instructions' or 'Rules' drawn up for Cheyne's patron Sir Joseph Jekyll and designed to enable him to 'Conduct his Health for the future...in the Manner of supporting his Spirits free and full, under the great Business he is engaged in' (p. xi).[28] Cheyne expanded this into a polite manual addressed to a particular audience of 'very learned, ingenious, and even Religious Persons, who being weak and tender (as such generally are), have suffered to the last for want of a due Regimen of Diet, and other Directions of Health'. It is the 'Sickly and the Aged, the Studious and the Sedentary, persons of weak Nerves and Gentlemen of the Learned Professions', who, despite their sensual restraints, fail to find 'Ease and Quiet', through ignorance of the correct rules to follow. 'The Robust, the Luxurious, the Pot-Companions, the Loose, and the Abandoned, have no Business here; their Time is not yet come' (p. xiv). An Essay of Health is a manual directed towards an anxious intelligentsia finding themselves struggling to survive within an increasingly competitive, commercial society. Its aim was to enable them to achieve 'Health, Ease and Freedom of Spirits', through the careful self-control of their physical and mental environment. Cheyne's basic *Regimen* prescribed regular exercise, various hygienic personal habits, the avoidance of all strong drink and 'low', largely vegetarian diets.

---

[25] Works of Voltaire, (Banbury, 1972), Letter D9499, pp. 417-8.

[26] The translation, undertaken at Cheyne's house in Bath, is often bound with Cheyne's, De Natura Fibrae Ejusque Laxae Sive Resolutae Morbis Tractatus (1725). Also translated by Robertson, this never appeared in English.

[27] L. J. Rather, *The 'Six Things Non-Natural'* Clio Medica, 3 (1968), pp. 337-47.

[28] Cheyne's central place in a neglected, but substantial literature of medical 'self-help' is discussed by Ginnie Smith in *Prescribing the Rules of Health: Self Help and Advice in the Eighteenth Century* Patients and Practitioners (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 249-82.

Cheyne's autobiographical Preface to the An Essay of Health is particularly revealing. In 1723, his health was again in relapse and he wrote under the conviction that he was soon to die. A new credo of polite humility informs what one anonymous critic termed Cheyne's 'Prefatical Recantation', and the Essay as a whole.[29] Whilst repenting his former involvement in ungentlemanly controversies, Cheyne claims to 'heartily condemn and detest all personal Reflexions, all malicious and unmannerly Turns, and all false and unjust Representations, as unbecoming Gentlemen, Scholars, and Christians'. He publicly eschews his former concern with abstruse mathematics. Although he accepts that mathematical studies may 'quicken and sharpen the Invention, strengthen and extend the Imagination, improve and refine the reasoning Faculty, and are of Use both in the necessary and luxurious Refinement of mechanical Arts', nevertheless they fail to 'rectify the Will, sweeten the Temper, or mend the Heart', and they often 'leave a Stiffness, Positiveness, and Sufficiency on weak Minds, much more pernicious to Society, and the Interests of the Great End of our Being'. Perhaps Pitcairne was in Cheyne's thoughts as he claimed that mathematics is simply an 'edge-tool', which should only be put into the hands of those who are already spiritually humble, otherwise it will encourage vanity, intellectual pride, and claims to infallibility, even in matters pertaining to religion. Cheyne now strives to write with 'as little Subtilty and Refinement...as the Present state of Natural Philosophy could admit', being 'often contented with plain and obvious Facts to account for Appearances, and the Cautions thence deduced; when according to the Humour of the present Age, I might have run into refined Speculations of Metaphysicks, or Mathematicks'.[30] Cheyne's attitude was informed by contact with pietists, who took up Poiret's theosophical arguments for rejecting the mathematical-mechanical orientation of Newtonians. Poiret had claimed that mathematical attempts to unravel the mysteries of nature are spiritually bankrupt because they rely entirely upon fallen reason (see Appendix 1). By 1740, Cheyne was claiming that 'Faith and Hope must eternally exclude Mathematical Certainty', and that 'precise' knowledge would actually impede our spiritual 'Restauration' (ER, p. 12-14). The pious Isaac Watts, in his popular Improvement of the Mind (1741), was to wholeheartedly endorse the verdict of Cheyne ('a considerable Man'), that abstruse mathematical studies can lead to irreligious pride. But Cheyne's 1724 preface betrays more worldly

---

29 Remarks on Dr Cheyne's Essay (1724- 5?), p. 4. Another typical response to what Cheyne's enemies saw as his 'false Piety', is found in the anonymous Letter to Dr Cheyne (1724-5?), which talks of 'that self-deniedness you put on, in your Preface, that Air of Piety that you put on in almost every Period, will perswade many to believe so good a Man wou'd never publish a Book to pamper his Vanity, and wou'd never pretend to the Knowledge of any thing he was an absolute stranger to' (p. 4).

30 EH, pp.iv- xvi.

motives for his change of heart, when he notes that 'Indulging and Rioting in these so exquisitely bewitching Contemplations, being only proper for publick Professors, and those born under no outward Necessities'.

This hint that practical, economic pressures shaped Cheyne's intellectual reorientation away from abstruse mathematics towards popular practical methods of cure, is supported by evidence that he came under direct, commercially motivated pressure from his bookseller. The Doctor's associate, Nathaniel Hooke, told Spence that Cheyne's Essay had originally been entitled 'A Treatise of Sanity and Longevity', but 'the Sale of a book may be hurt a great deal by an ill-chosen title. Dr Cheyne's bookseller absolutely refused to print his book on health unless he would change the title'.[31] Leake's objection raises interesting questions concerning the expectations of eighteenth century readers of medical or philosophical books. The term 'Treatise' suggested something more erudite and speculative than an 'Essay' (we note in this context, that Hume only found a general readership after he turned from a 'Treatise' to essay writing). The final title placed Cheyne's work into an established genre of polite medical writing designed for the educated layman as exemplified in Sir William Temple's *Essay of Health* in Miscellanea III (1702), which provided a model.[32] Both works combine scholarly credentials with the more easeful elements of a gentlemanly conduct-book or polite journalistic essay. The contemporary use of Cheyne's Essay as light, practical reading is visibly evident from Lord Balmerino's entertainingly annotated copy which accompanied its owner on a European health tour.[33]

The title, which Leake rejected, points forward to the concerns of Cheyne's most discussed work The English Malady (1733), a specific account of the fashionable complaints which he examines under the generic term 'nervous disorders', where again he chose, or was persuaded by others to adopt, a popular rather than learned main title. In both cases he was responding to the influence of the popular 'scientific cults' prompted by Addison's call to bring 'Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses' (Spectator 10).[34] Cheyne's gifts as a medical writer served the interests of a commercially astute James Leake, who set out to cater for the visitors to Bath who wanted to take both their medicine and their philosophy in a palatable form. In his Preface to the Essay of Health, Cheyne argues that previous practical medical

---

31 Spence, Anecdotes I, p. 350.

32 Temple, Works, III, p. 289f. Cheyne quotes from Temple. Cheyne was also influenced by Locke's discussions of the best regimen for studious activity in Essay upon Education.

33 NLS, Acc. 9345.

34 For related trends in philosophical literature, see J. V. Price *The Reading Of Philosophical Literature'* in Isabel Rivers (ed.), 1982.

authors have either been inconsistent, over general, or imprecise. In particular, when they trouble themselves 'to give the Reasons and Philosophy' behind their directives, they lack 'the Perspicuity and natural Way of convincing the ingenious, sickly and tender Sufferers, so necessary to make them chearfully and so readily undergo such severe Restraints; which I take to be the most difficult Part of such a Work, and which I have Laboured with my utmost Power to supply' (p. xvii). Consequently, in his new popular approach, theoretical or philosophical explanation is only included in digestible amounts, merely providing a sugar-coating for the bitter-pill of practical directives towards abstemiousness.

Pope disdainfully compared the fashionable response to Cheyne's Essay with that to William Wollaston's physico-theological Religion of Nature Delineated (1724): 'the very women read it [Nature Delineated], and pretend to be charm'd with the beauty which they generally think the least of. They make as much ado about truth, since this book appeared as they did about health when Dr Cheyne's came out; and they will doubtless be consulted in the pursuit of one, as the other'.[35] Pope put an ironic distance between himself and what he perceived to be a vulgar trivialization of the privileged masculine discourses of theology and natural philosophy.[36] Though impossible to prove, it seems probable that Cheyne's works had a particular appeal to female readers allotted the traditional roles of domestic carers and nurses, at a time when many middle-class households did a certain amount of doctoring at home.[37]

The success of Cheyne's popular mode of writing justifies the claim that he must be seen as a leading scientific wit, who was as much a moralist and satirist as a physician and philosopher: a claim confirmed by his literary style which is characteristically ironic, often taking off from colourfully original or proverbial epigrammatic declarations. Here is the forceful, confident opening to An Essay of Health:

---

35 Pope to Hugh Bethel, 12 July (1724 ?), Corr, II, p. 178.

36 Discussing the role of women as targets for such projects, G. S. Rousseau notes that Cheyne thought natural philosophy a fit subject to be included in the pious 'Catalogue of Pamela's Library' which he proposed to compile for Richardson, as a way of exploiting his patient's unexpected literary success (*Science Books and their Readers* pp. 214). Although he was not a feminist in any modern sense, Cheyne's relatively liberal attitude to female education is confirmed in a letter to his patient Lady Huntingdon, concerning the propriety of making her the dedicatee of his forthcoming Essay of Regimen. Here we catch Cheyne correcting his own liberal instincts in favour of conservative social conventions: 'I intended to ask leave to have the honour to inscribe it to your Ladyship, without flattery or flourishing. But because of the uncommoness and abstractedness of many things in it, and because it is chiefly designed for learned and philosophical men, I fear there might be reckoned some impropriety in this'. The work appeared in 1740, with a dedication to Lord Huntingdon (Mullet, Letters, (Hastings) p. 61).

37 Ginnie Smith, *Prescribing the Rules of Health*, pp. 249-82.

> It is a common saying, That every Man past Forty is either a *Fool* or a *Physician:* It might have been added, that he was a *Divine* too: for, as the World goes at present, there is not any Thing that the Generality of the better Sort of Mankind so lavishly and so unconcernedly throw away as *Health,* except *eternal Felicity.* Most Men know when they are ill but very few when they are well. And yet it is most certain that 'tis easier to *preserve* Health than to *recover* it, and to *prevent* Diseases than to *cure* them. Towards the first, the means are mostly in our Power: Little else is required then to *bear and forbear.* But towards the latter, the Means are perplexed and uncertain; and for the Knowledge of them the far greatest Part of Mankind must apply to others, of whose Skill and Honesty they are in a great measure ignorant, and the Benefit of whose Art they can but conditionally and precautiously obtain. A crazy Constitution, original weak Nerves, dear-bought experience in Things helpful and hurtful, and long Observation on the Complaints of others who came here for relief to this universal Infirmary, BATH, have at last (in some measure), taught me some of the most effectual Means of preserving Health and prolonging Life in those who are *tender* and *sickly* and Labour under *chronical* Distempers.(pp. 1-3)[38]

Cheyne's carefully balanced but dogmatic prose moves smoothly from the universal - a well known proverb - to the particularity of his personal experience of the sufferings he generously hopes to prevent in others. His emphatic, aphoristic style was so distinct that he was parodied by *Ephraim Quibus M.D.* (Fielding?), writing on 'Grubbism' in medical writing in The Grub St Journal (8, 1730), as '*Meteorus*...swollen with epithets', next to *Digressive* (Dr Daniel Turner) and *Marvellous* (Dr Nicholas Robinson). Cheyne's popularity as a wielder of the *bon mot*, meant that, at his death, a commercially astute publisher could 'cash in' with a derivative Dr Cheyne's Account of Himself, and of his Writings, with his Character...Aphorisms...Remarks etc. etc. (1743), which quickly ran to a second edition.[39]

Cheyne's mature work as a 'moral physician' carries a veneer of Addisonian politeness appropriate to his engagement with doctrines of sentimental piety, but, particularly in The English Malady, his ironies can become darker as he expresses an almost Swiftian sense of human failing and misery. He looks back to the satires of Butler and Pitcairne, but also forward to the gnomic posturings of his admirer, Samuel Johnson. John Wiltshire probably underestimates Cheyne's influence in an otherwise cogent account of Johnson's adoption of a similar role of 'medical moralist' in The Rambler.[40] Examples of both Cheyne's philosophical vocabulary and his more

---

[38] The opening phrase is "Cheyne's" contribution to an 'Imaginary Conversation' which Thomas Gray overheard between the books in his library where Cheyne's Essay 'conversed' with works by Henry More, Euclid, Boileau, Swift and a Vade Mecum (Correspondence of Gray,Walpole etc. (1915), II, pp. 17-19).

[39] Rousseau identifies the editor as 'John Campbell, (1708-1775),' and argues that he was advertising his translation of a work on longevity by Johann Heinrich Colhausen. This may be so, but Campbell was not the author of 'Voyage to the Levant' [sic], as he claims, though Cheyne's associate Charles Perry M.D. did publish A View of the Levant etc. in 1743 (*IDC*, f. 81).

[40] J. Wiltshire Johnson and the Medical World (1990), Ch. 4 & p. 231.

choice *quips* found their way into the Dictionary (1755); notably under *Popgun*, where Johnson quotes Cheyne's charge against the ungrounded fears 'amongst the fair sex' concerning the detrimental effects of 'Tea, Coffee, Chocolate and Snuff' that 'health and Life, however frail and Brittle, are too strong Forts to be taken or destroy'd by such puny and insufficient Pop-Gun Artillery' (EM, p. 49).[41] We often catch Johnson imitating Cheyne's voice in his own, frequently authoritative, and equally opinionated medical advice to friends: Mrs Thrale is told that 'gentle purges, and slight phlebotomies are not my favourites, they are pop-gun batteries, which lose time and effect nothing...'.[42] Cheyne provided the young Johnson with a model for his own strategy of grooming wit for the service of human science and piety but it was Cheyne's particular concern with 'nervous disorders' which engaged Johnson's attention.[43] We shall return to Johnson's interest in the latter part of Chapter 7, after a full account of this central aspect of Cheyne's medical career.

**The Hyp Doctor**

An Essay of Health is addressed to 'the Sickly and the Aged, the Studious and the sedentary, persons of weak Nerves and Gentleman of the learned Professions' (xiv). This traditional connection, between scholarly or imaginative genius with a physical disposition towards melancholia, can be traced back to many Classical authorities, collected together by Robert Burton in his encylopaedic Anatomy of Melancholy (1621). When Cheyne later came to treat the novelist Samuel Richardson for nervous complaints, he defended his own authority by declaring that as a result of his own nervous illness he had read everything that had ever been written on the subject. He was probably not exaggerating. For his part, Cheyne was to take the traditional figure of the irritable man of genius, and dress him up in the new clothes of a popular scientific and sentimental vocabulary, lending him fresh authority through a theory of physiological determinism.

Discussions of Cheyne's influence as a fashionable 'nerve-doctor' to the *literati* have tended to focus upon The English Malady (1733), but Cheyne was already known as a specialist in nervous disorders by 1724. The anonymous Latin verses prefacing the Essay of Health describe the power of Cheyne's doctrines to banish the 'fleeting images of the melancholy spectre' when 'the swelling hypochondria prepares black clouds/that give melancholy Visions to the clouded Mind'. The eulogist

---

41 W.K. Wimsatt Philosophic Words (1968), pp. 30-35 and Appendix b, p. 151.

42 Letter quoted by Wiltshire, p. 85.

43 Isobel Grundy's 'Samuel Johnson: Man of Maxims ?', in Samuel Johnson: New Critical Essays (1984), does not cite Cheyne but provides a context for arguing his stylistic importance to Johnson.

implores the reader to pay close attention to Cheyne's lesson that health and virtue are allied, his warnings of 'the thousand crimes of an unrestrained belly', and his advice on how to avoid 'loathsome drugs and the surgeon's terrifying knife'.

If Cheyne's reputation as a *Hyp Doctor* was established by 1724, the theoretical basis for his mature comments, upon what he came to term nervous sensibility were already firmly in place by 1705. In the physiological chapter of the Philosophical Principles (1705), Cheyne gives an account of nerve structure and function in the iatro-mechanical terminology that he continued to rehearse throughout his career. The nerves are described as bundles of small 'pipes', 'wherein the Animal Spirits are treasur'd up for the Expenses of Motion and *Sensation*' (PP, p. 325). They 'arise from the Glands and cineratous part of the Brain, and are terminated in all points of the Body', and function as the mediating channels whereby knowledge of the exterior world enters the brain:

> All *Sensation* is perform'd by the immediate Action of the finer and more fluid Parts of Bodies, upon the *Organs* of Sense; the Impulse communicated by these subtile parts of Bodies, upon the Organs fitly dispos'd, is through them transmitted to the *Nerves*, appropriated and contriv'd for such a Sense, through them to the Brain...so that in some manner, all *Sensation* is nothing but *Touching*, several ways diversified (PP, p. 328).

Although Cheyne later rejected the notion of animal spirits and 'the doctrine of the hollow nerve', he held to this basic model of the nerves as the link between the brain (the seat of the soul), and the external physical world which had been established by Locke's associate Dr Thomas Willis.[44] Our skin has a myriad nerve endings, each protected by a carefully positioned 'scale' designed to 'hinder Objects from making too painful and exquisite an Impression on the *Nerves*, and to skreen them from external Injuries'. It acts as an '*Organ* of the sense of *Touching*, and Feeling' (Ibid., p. 326). Such physiological explanations being offered by Cheyne and other contemporary physicians gave a new mechanistic vocabulary to a society fashionably obsessed with nervous complaints. The 'Vapours' of Queen Anne's court transformed into 'the Hyp' or 'Nervous Sensibility' of the Hanoverians.

This obsession and the related literary cult of sensibility in which the language of nerve physiology became transformed into a language of sentiment, has been the subject of numerous studies all of which emphasise Cheyne's prominent place as a mediator between the scholarly medical and popular literary spheres of discourse.[45] As John Mullan remarks, 'even comparatively late in the century, there is scarcely a

---

[44] Rousseau, *Nerves, Spirits and Fibres etc.*, pp. 145-6.

[45] Ibid., pp. 152-3; Todd, Sensibility, p. 19; Mullan, Sentiment and Sociability, pp. 203-16; 235-8; and R. A. Erickson, Mother Midnight, pp. 95; 208.

separation between vocabularies of "feeling" and "passion" on the one hand, and of anatomically considered mechanism on the other'.[46] This is true of Cheyne's Essay, where particularly in Chapter 6, 'Of the Passions', he discusses the affective life of the Passions (or feelings), with the same vocabulary and in the same context as the delicate life of the nerves. Cheyne's unjustly neglected account opens with the simple statement that 'the Passions have a greater Influence upon *Health* and *Long Life*, than most People are aware of' (p. 144). He defines passions as the 'affections' of either internal or external stimuli upon the body or the mind:

> The *Soul* resides eminently in the *Brain*, where all the *Nervous* Fibres terminate inwardly, like a Musician by a well-tuned *Instrument*, which has *Keys* within, on which it may play, and without, on which *other Persons* and *Bodies* may also play. By the inward keys. I understand those Means by which the Thoughts of the *Mind* affect the *Body*, and by the *out-ward*, those whereby the *Actions* or *Sensations* of the *Body*, affect the Mind. Both these *Affections* may be called *Passions* in a general View, as, either Part of the Compound is acted upon (EH, p. 144-5).

Although Cheyne describes a reciprocal relationship between mind and body, his emphasis is upon the physical condition of the nerves, rather than the inner state of the immaterial soul; upon the influence of the body on the mind, rather than the reverse. He illustrates the influence of the Passions upon the 'animal oeconomy' according to 'the different Constitutions of Men':

> Those who have a very *springy, lively*, and *elastic* Fibres have the *quickest Sensations*, a weaker *Impulse* producing a stronger *Sensation* in them. These generally excel in the *Animal* Faculty of *Imagination*. Hence the Poet, —*Genus irritabile Vatum*. And therefore, your Men of *Imagination* are generally given to *sensual* Pleasure, because the Objects of the *Sense* yield *them* a more delicate *Touch*, and a livelier *Sensation* than they do others (Ibid..).

Those of less elastic nerve fibres, which retain impressions longer, are suited to intellectual work, but being 'susceptible of the slow and lasting *Passions*' are eventually consumed by them in time. A third group of rigid and inflexible nerves enjoy good health but 'scarce have any Passions at all, or any lively Sensations, and are incapable of lasting Impressions...such are *Ideots*, *peasants* and *Mechanicks* and all those we call Indolent People' (EH, pp. 159-160). The valetudinarian aristocrat Lord Balmerino, for one, found solace in this theory of a constitutional 'nervous' social hierarchy, penciling in the margin of his copy: 'the most senseless, the most healthy'.[47]

Cheyne had in fact already discussed this hierarchy of physiological sensitivity in 1705, in a passage that reveals the underlying religious motivation behind its

---

[46] Mullan, p. 220.

[47] NLS, Acc. 9345.

formulation. After explaining the action of the nerves and their role in making our skin a kind of sensory organ, Cheyne adds:

> But that which is yet most wonderful is the apt proportioning this Sense of *Feeling*, to the actions and Impulses of the Bodies among which we live. For had our *Sense* of *Feeling*, been ten or twenty times as exquisite as it is, then we shou'd have been in perpetual Torment, ev'ry Hair had been a dagger, the touch of the Feather, or the Wing of a *Fly*, had made us cry out. We shou'd not have dar'd to have approach'd our Cloath's or our Beds; in short we had liv'd in perpetual Misery; and had it been as many times fuller, or more *callous* than it is, we had lost some of the most exquisite Pleasures of Life, out tenderest Parts had been as insensible as our Hairs or Nails, and might have been torn away or consum'd, without out knowledge or concern (PP, p. 237).

It is evidence of a wise design that in all animals 'this sense is adapted to the Circumstances wherein they live'. Discussing the protective function of the scales of scarf-skin, that 'guard the Organs of this Sense', he emphasises their vulnerability to friction: 'this Sense of *Feeling* is rendered more exquisite and sensible, or more dull and imperceptible, as it is more or less used', (arising from the creation of callouses or 'scales' brought about by the secretion and subsequent hardening of a fluid produced by pressure). This mechanical explanation supports a traditional Christian ethic of temperance:

> Consequently the more moderately we use the Pleasures of Sense, the more lively and sensible they are, and the more immoderately we use these Pleasures, the less they are so; which is a wonderful Contrivance of the *Author* of *Nature*; for where it otherwise, so distracted is the most Part of Mankind, that they would certainly destroy themselves, since we see where there is both Sin and present Punishment, they are not kept from excesses that way (PP, I, pp. 328-9).

The corollary of this, implicit in the Essay of Health, and to be made more explicit in The English Malady (1733), is that a more delicate nervous sensibility is an inherited sign of intellectual refinement, and when suitably cultivated, it may serve as a controlling mechanism that ensures the maintenance of moral and intellectual superiority; an aspect of Cheyne's theory of sensibility to be discussed at length in the next chapter.

The account of the Passions Cheyne published in 1724, is less materialistic than his iatro-mechanical accounts of 'feeling' in the original Philosophical Principles (1705).[48] In An Essay of Health, Cheyne accommodates an established mechanistic theory of the Passions derived from Descartes (which he would have read at university), within his theories of 'spiritual attraction'. The Passions are termed 'animal' or 'spiritual', depending upon whether they are the result of physical (animal) or spiritual stimuli. He defines moral good and evil according to the polarity of union

---

[48] Noted by Guerrini, *Isaac Newton etc.*,p. 241.

or separation from God, and applies this dialectic to the Passions defining them according to whether they are stimulated or drawn towards morally good or evil objects. The Passions divide into two simple opposing categories, the 'Pleasurable or Painful': 'In the Sense all *Passions* may be reduced to *Love* and *Hatred*, of which *Joy* and *Sorrow, Hope* and *Fear*, etc. are but different *Modifications* or *Complexions*.'. (p. 151). The Passions may be termed acute or chronic like diseases and affect the body: 'the Acute Passions whether pleasurable or painful...effect a lively Circulation of the *Fluids*, crisp up and constrict the Solids for some short time. Thus sudden Gusts of Joy or Grief, Pleasure or Pain, stimulate and spur the Nervous Fibres...'(p. 153). The 'Chronical' Passions are more damaging and 'wear out, waste and destroy the Nervous System gradually' (Ibid..). Sustained indulgence in grief or morbid thoughts mechanically affects the imagination by habituating the nerves to a particular physical disposition, but it is violent or sudden Passions, such as hatred or anger, which like a fever may cause sudden death:

> But if the Passions be raging and tumultuous, and constantly fuelled, nothing less than He, who has the Hearts of men in his hands, and forms them as a Potter does his Clay, who stills the raging of the Seas, and calms the Tempests of the Air, can settle and quiet such tumultuous, overbearing Hurricanes in the Mind, and Animal Oeconomy (p. 161).

Cheyne's quietism surfaces again in his conclusion that the only cure for someone so wretched is to drown all other Passions in 'that Spiritual one of Love of God'. This account is far less abstruse than his 1715 foray into the metaphysics of 'Desire', but he places even more emphasis upon the optimistic ethical implications of the doctrine of spiritual reunion whereby spirits 'in their proper vacuity', tend to unite (p. 149). He remains keen to establish a close connection between spirit and matter, the soul and the body, and yet emphasises the infinitely superior nature of the 'Divine Spark'. The Scriptures provided Cheyne (as they had the Philadelphians), with revelational evidence that pure spirits are capable of acting upon each other without the mediation of 'organical bodies'. He cites St Paul's 'Extasy' and Moses' 'commerce with his maker when he spoke to *God Face to Face*'(EH, p. 145). He does not oppose the Passions through a rigid promotion of reason, but prescribes their calm cultivation in a sentimental doctrine of spiritual love.

The obvious popularity of this text and the many critical responses to Cheyne's Essay, appearing around 1724-6, which often address themselves to this philosophical aspect of his work, suggests that Cheyne's work was significant in generating contemporary debate on the Passions.[49] Balmerino annotated this chapter of the

---

[49] Cheyne's account might be compared with those of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Smith and Samuel Johnson.

Essay, as much as the more practical sections, noting where Cheyne's ideas accord with those of Newton, Clarke, Leibnitz and Descartes. Fielding was not so reverent when making a deliberately cynical and bawdy allusion to 'the famous Dr Cheyne' and his theory that 'fiery punch' inflames the Passions in Tom Jones (1751) (Bk. XI, Ch. viii). An anonymous 'FRS' had already summed up a common objection that Cheyne's 'system' is 'too refined for most of his readers' in Remarks on Dr Cheyne's Essay on Health ...wherein some of the Doctor's Notorious Contradictions and False Reasonings are Laid Open (1724 ?) (p. 76). This is typical of several responses, mainly from fellow physicians, who found Cheyne's spiritualism too rarefied and possibly heretical.

The Northumbrian M.D., Edward Strother, objected to Cheyne's idealism: 'were we so nobly formed as the learned Dr Cheyne expresses, we would need no Dictates to instruct us how to govern and tame these Wildnesses'.[50] For Strother, 'the first motions of Passion [are], but short fits of Madness' in which the animal spirits run riot in ungovernable 'fury and force'. Virtue is measured by our ability to use the will to control appetite, but the will is blind and relies upon the understanding, which in turn relies upon sense data. Consequently, it is essential that our will, through our disordered sense, should not 'receive any Prejudice from the sickly, or disorder'd State of the Fluids or Solids'. False impressions may cause us to fall into pernicious errors, but these cannot be morally culpable if 'our Senses and Intellects are much diminished'. Strother agrees with Cheyne's insistence that we possess a spiritual element, but objects that 'he even entitles every Man to a share of the Divinity' and that 'to have an increated being within us, and to be impeccable, which necessarily follows, we might justly say what Lucifer was condemn'd for (I shall be like the Highest), nor shou'd we be ensnar'd with those debaucheries, which he elsewhere complains mankind destroys himself with'. There is some truth in Strother's conclusion that '*Cheyne* plays *Jupiter's* Game with the Human race; he debases him, and exalts him according to the Humour that reigns, he Tosses him high or low, like a tennis Ball'. This is a particularly apt image for it was perhaps Cheyne's own sense of being tossed high and low by God that led to the tensions between the pessimistic and optimistic elements in his theodicy.

The anonymous author of A Letter to Dr Cheyne M.D. Occasion'd by his Essay on Health and Long Life (1724-5), objected that Cheyne seemed to ascribe thinking

---

50 Strother, An Essay on Sickness and Health...in which Dr Cheyne's mistaken Opinions in his late Essay are Occasionally Taken Notice of (1725), p. 483ff. Strother wrongly believed that Cheyne was the author of Guardian No. 126, which shows the 'Rock from whence Dr Cheyne's Scheme of the Passions is hewn'.

to matter or, conversely, material substance to God (the same charge levelled against Berkeley). Cheyne's implication that painful mental sensations can directly create bodily pain through the mediation of the nervous system is inconsistent with the notion of a transcendental 'spiritual sense': 'how can the Soul perceive anything from out-ward Objects, without receiving some impressions from them? And how can such impressions get access to our minds, but by the mediation and avenues of the senses? And are not all Organs of our senses bodily organs ?' (p. 63).

Such comments point to what might be deemed an underlying tension in Cheyne's thought between his continued adherence to a mechanistic model of the body, and his mysticism, which encouraged him to develop imaginative theories of spiritual transcendence. It must be noted that Cheyne continually emphasised that the spirit is imprisoned within its earthly tabernacle, and therefore its relationship to the external physical world is dependent upon the perfection of the bodily machine with its hydraulic system of nerves and fibres. Cheyne believed that the immaterial spirit and the physical body interact in a rational way according to God's established 'Laws of Nature', as partly unveiled by Newton and, God willing, the secret codes of psycho-somatic communication may eventually be fully revealed. A discussion of Cheyne's responses to fashionable explanations of the manner by which the immaterial spirit acts upon the material body is reserved for the following chapter which examines the The English Malady. To conclude the present chapter, consideration is given to Cheyne's cult status as a promoter of fashionable doctrines of medico-religious pietism.

The popularity of An Essay of Health and Long Live assured that Cheyne's name became synonymous with a fashionable sentimental cult of temperance and natural simplicity for the rest of the century. It may have directly affected legislation, since its dedicatee, Sir Joseph Jekyll, was instrumental in promoting the taxation of spirits by The Gin Act (1736). The important role of the Methodists in promoting Cheyne's doctrines is discussed in Chapter 8. The American medical 'pioneer', Cotton Mather, quickly assimilated Cheyne's preventive methods into his medical treatise, *The Angel of Bethesda* (1724).[51] Writing in The Bee III (1759), Oliver Goldsmith argued that 'to ward off the gripe of poverty...if you be caught dining upon a halfpenny porrenger of pease soup and potatoes...you may observe, that Dr Cheyne has prescribed pease broth for the gravel, hint that you are not one of those who are always making a deity of your belly'.[52] Popularisers like Vicesimus Knox, writing *On the Effects of*

---

[51] See Otho T. Beal and R. H. Shyrock Cotton Mather: first significant figure in American Medicine (1954), p. 195 and Ch. VII.

[52] Goldsmith, Works, I, p. 400.

*Intemperate Study on the Health; and on the Duty of Paying Regard to the Preservation of Health* in his Essays Moral and Literary (2 vols. 1779), praised the 'advice of the celebrated Cheney'. In 1792, Thomas Rowlandson could pointedly depict a book with the parodic title 'Dr Cheyne on the Benefits of a Spare Diet' in his cartoon *Temperance Enjoying a Frugal Meal* (an attack on the over-consumption in the household of the Prince of Wales). As late as 1823, when 'a Lover of Mankind', published Practical Rules for the Restoration and Preservation of Health, extracted from Cheyne's Essay, three editions were called for. Even in Milan, in 1846, one Fillipo Baldwin was publishing Cheyne's *Aforisma* Regolamento per la Felice Vecchieza.

Cheyne's ascetic doctrines owed a debt to a Pythagorean tradition, available in works he actually cites by Origen, Cornaro, Lessius, and Pythagoras himself, but he is notably cautious about revealing any contact with more unorthodox contemporary practitioners. Nevertheless, by 1724, Cheyne's sentimental vocabulary betrays his contact with 'spiritual friends'.[53] Pietism encouraged Cheyne to appeal to faith over reason, or to the veracity of feeling and sentiment over cold rational calculation. He uses this sentimentalism to equate nervous sensibility with a positive notion of pious introspection, but Cheyne's introspective approach did not extend to the soul; it is the physical state of his nerves which fascinate. As a student of the philosophical-psychology of Descartes and Locke, Cheyne's alchemical laboratory was himself, as he put his wayward body under the intellectual microscope. His 'recantatory' preface closes with a conventional apology for troubling the reader with the author's 'private matters' but, ironically, those private matters are one of its most interesting features. Later public confessions, most notably his *The Author's Own Case*, in The English Malady, were to become Cheyne's hallmark, as he repeatedly emphasised the fact that he shared his patients nervous sufferings. Indeed it was his declaration that 'I have consulted nothing but my own experience and Observation on my own crazy Carcase and the Infirmities of others', which marks his Essay, as a radical departure in medical literature.

---

[53] G. S. Rousseau places Cheyne's work within a neglected tradition of medical writing, which may be traced from the Renaissance, through Paracelsus (who influenced Boehme), to Pordage, Tryon, Oliver, Byfield, Mather, to Cheyne and the Wesleys. He notes Cheyne's similarities with the contemporary empiric, Thomas Tryon, who took to studying Boehme in a 'crisis of the spirit' in 1657. Cheyne's work compares with Tryon's 'Way to Long-Life and Health', Part III of which appeared as The Knowledge of A Man's Self The Surest Guide in 1704, the year of Cheyne's breakdown. Though Tryon was associated with the Philadelphian Society in the 1690s, creating his own small sect who read Guyon and practiced dietary abstinence, Cheyne never mentions him. Cheyne must have known of the activities of Dr Timothy Byfield, another 'mystical' physician who joined the Prophets in 1707, made medico-millenarian converts in the Bath-Bristol area and published his Directions Tending to Health and Long-Life in 1717.

Cheyne's change of heart was clearly perceived as a betrayal of principles by some of his colleagues. His freethinking, Bristol rival, Dr Thomas Morgan, facetiously points to Cheyne's reorientation in the climax of the Preface to his Philosophical Principles of Medicine (1725):

> A CELEBRATED Member of the Faculty, who, till within these few Years, had been universally allow'd as the greatest Physician in *England*, set out in the Practice with a New Theory of Fevers, and rais'd vast Expectations of a new animal Oeconomy; in which the deepest Mysteries of Nature were to be reveal'd, every Particle of Blood measur'd and weigh'd, and all the Powers of all the minutest Springs and Movements of the animal Machine adjusted, computed, and reduced to a mathematical Certainty by the fluxionary Geometry.
>
> But this animal Oeconomy never appear'd, and I shall make no Reflections upon Theory, because the Doctor seems now to have no great Opinion of Theorys himself; and has, I believe, convinced every body of the Vanity of philosophizing in Physick. He has found out a better way of rendering Mankind immortal, without the knowledge of Mathematicks or Mechanism, only by Fasting and Prayer, by subsisting without Meat and Drink, and Living by Faith above the World on the Philosophical Principles of *reveal'd Religion*. In short, he has plainly prov'd that Souls gravitate as much as Bodys; that Interest is their proper Centre; and the Mathematicks and Mechanism can signify nothing, when a Man has once raised an Indolent implicit Reputation, and Experience has taught him an easier way of getting Money. But I must spare so great a Man, lest he should demonstrate from the Doctrine of Fluxions, and the Infinitude of his Spiritual Cone, that I am mathematically, mechanically, physically, morally, analogically and hypochondriacally mistaken (li-lii).

Morgan in fact sets out in this work to demolish the established iatro-mathematical programme, by attacking Borelli's calculations upon which James Keill had based some of his theories of secretion. Claiming a superior theoretical rigour, Morgan simply picks on Cheyne as someone who reasons 'mechanically upon immechanical principles'. The allusion to conferring immortality is a jibe at Cheyne's obsessive concern with longevism. This must be understood within the context of quietist millenarianism. His search for the secret to long-life, for a way of turning the human body into a perpetuum mobile, was informed by the belief that bodily corruption was indicative of the Fall. By prolonging life to its 'natural' or Adamic, pre-lapsarian length, Cheyne hoped that one would undergo sufficient earthly mortification and purification to experience the imminent New Jerusalem without actually having to undergo physical death.[54]

In 1724, Cheyne taunted the Faculty by his disingenuous, and deeply ironic claim that he did not wish to 'incroach on the Province of the Physician' by reducing the *Materia Morbifica:*

---

54 Cheyne to Richardson in Mullett, Letters LIV, p. 83. This millenarian motivation has been ignored by commentators. Cheyne's printed and private writings, reveal him frequently rehearsing an historical list of spiritually enlightened, temperate historical figures, ranging from Desert Saints to Newton, whose longevity is associated with a return to a pre-lapsarian state of incorruptibility and natural enlightenment.

> ...so I never entertain'd the most remote vanity to think any endeavour of mine could make so considerable a Change in the Nation; especially when the devil, the World and the Flesh were on the other side of the Question, which have stood their ground even against the Rules of Life and Immortality brought by the Light of the Gospel' (p. xix).

Professional rivals and 'Hackney Scribblers', condemned what they thought to be Cheyne's false piety and made much of the fact that he appeared to be betraying his own profession.[55] The anonymous Letter to George Cheyne (1724-5?), reveals a common objection in the subtitle: 'shewing the danger of laying down General Rules to those who are not acquainted with the Animal Oeconomy'. Finding Cheyne's Essay 'now in almost everybody's hand', this author fears that it encourages 'people to tamper with their Constitutions, which they cannot possibly regulate by any General Rules', as each case is different' (pp. 4-5).[56] There is much about Cheyne's mercenary adherences to theories, and his boasful claims to an intimacy with Newton. Everyone is persuaded to only trust themselves with the management of their health unless they happen to be 'just in that Place where Dr CHEYNE, is to be consulted with' (Ibid., pp. 45-53). Cheyne's apparent betrayal of his own profession's deliberate self-mystification even prompted a broadside ballad which opens with the following verses:

> The Physicians of late
> Held a learned Debate
> How they might more Diseases and money beget.
> Come Listen Good People and I'll tell you why
> The Doctors would fain have all Honest men dye
> For these obstinat Fools
> Will not be made Tools
> But despite their long recipes and learn'd Rules
> O Cheyne! Oh Cheyne! If ere thy Health fails
> They'll surely dispatch thee for telling of tales
>
> For this same was He
> That with Sincerity
> Did open to all Men their Great Mystery
> And taught US that Temperance only contains
> The secret of health, without physic or pains
> And now they all try
> His book to decry
> To which End a late Author has most learnedly
> Endeavour'd to prove all his reason's unsound

---

55 The anonymous 'FRS' compares Cheyne to an old goose that cackles before its death, accusing him of ambition, of boasting about his social connections, and outright hypocrisy: he has kept quiet for twenty years so that he can further his own reputation as 'Doctor' Cheyne before attacking his colleagues (Remarks on Dr Cheyne's Essay, pp. iv-vi).

56 One of the only medical issues discussed in any depth is Cheyne's views regarding the function of the nerves. It is pointed out that he is inconsistent in his explanations, having rejected the notion of 'nervous fluids' in the earlier Essay of Gout, but apparently accepting them here (p. 45).

His assertions all false and their own most profound*...[57]

In the parlance of the 1960s we might term Cheyne an 'anti-physician', promoting preventive methods and a return to supposedly 'natural' principles of cure. These self-help doctrines were clearly seen as posing a threat by some established members of the medical profession.

Inevitably, Cheyne became embroiled in a barrage of criticisms, lampoons, satires and banter. A battle of wits took place when Cheyne's rival, the Bath physician Dr Wynter (sometimes 'Winter'), published the following lampoon:

Tell me from whom, fat-headed Scot,
Thou didst thy system learn;
From Hippocrate thou hast it not,
Nor Celsus, nor Pitcairne.

Suppose we own that *milk* is good,
And say the same of *grass*;
The one for *babes* is only food,
The other for an *ass*.

Doctor! one new prescription try,
(A friend's advice, forgive;)
Eat *grass*, reduce thyself, and *die*;
Thy *patients* then may *live*.

To which Cheyne replied:

My system, Doctor, is my own,
No tutor I pretend,
*My blunders* hurt myself alone,
But *yours* your dearest friend.

Were *you* to milk and straw confin'd,
Thrice happy might you be;
Perhaps you might *regain* your *mind*,
And from your *wit* get *free*.

I cannot your prescription try,
But heartily 'forgive';
Tis nat'ral you should bid *me* die
That you yourself may *live*.

Together these verses found their way into the journals and many subsequent biographical notices.[58]

---

[57] BM MS 1890 e. 5 p. 251 (Catalogue dates it 1725). A reference in the original to '*Dr Halsham on the Virtue of tea and Coffee', is untraced.

[58] London Magazine, 26 (1757), p. 510; Richard Graves, The Festoon (1766).

Goldsmith's Life of Richard Nash (1762), records some similar clashes between Cheyne and his fashionable Bath counterpart. Rudely remarking on the obscurity of Nash's origins, a socially pretentious Cheyne 'used frequently to say *Nash* had no father'.[59] Despite this hostility, Cheyne attended Nash when he was ill, but the latter's 'aversion to physick', meant, 'the next day the Doctor coming to see his patient, found him up and well; upon which he asked, if he had followed his prescription? Followed your prescription, cried *Nash*, No-Egad, if I had, I should have broke my neck, for I flung it out of two pairs of stairs window'. According to Goldsmith's blow by blow account, when Nash's sarcasm touched on something as close to Cheyne's heart as vegetarianism, the Doctor gave as good as he got:

> When *Cheney* recommended his vegetable diet, *Nash* would swear, that his design was to send half the world grazing like *Nebuchadnezzar*. Ay, Cheney would reply, *Nebuchadnezzar* was never such an infidel as thou art. It was but last week, gentleman, that I attended this fellow in a fit of sickness; there I found him rolling up his eyes to heaven, and crying for mercy; he would then swallow my drugs like breast-milk, yet now you hear him, how the old dog blasphemes the faculty.

Goldsmith adds that Cheyne's jest contained a strong germ of truth, for Nash did fear death and 'was generally very devout while it threatened him'.[60]

In 1732, when the Dutch landscapist, Johan Van Diest (c. 1680-1760), painted Cheyne's portrait, it was subsequently engraved by John Faber the Younger (1695?-1756), and sold as a mezzotint from 'the great Toy Shop in Bath'.[61] At Christmas 1732, Cheyne wrote to his patient Lord Binning:

> Since I cannot send you the print which Bertrand has made of a Greasy Face for his profit as he thinks, I send you the inscription my Brother Winter [sic] made for its inscription. The painter's name Van Diest...
>
> Van Diest & Nature did this once agree
> She left the Face unfinish't, so has he.[62]

Cheyne was good humoured enough to circulate this unflattering epigram amongst his friends, but for all his complaints at being 'teised', he seemed to thrive on controversy, as he took on a role as the persecuted conscience of Georgian high society.

---

[59] Works, III, p. 292.

[60] Ibid., pp. 357; 364.

[61] See frontispiece. The original painting is lost. There is a cruder version of the print by 'Tooley' in the BL. I have not seen the reversed version by J.M. Berngroth mentioned with details on Van Diest, in Rousseau *IDC*, p. 125.

[62] 24 Dec., 1732 (Mellerstain). Bertrand remains unidentified, but he may have owned 'the Great Toy Shop' and is probably 'Mr Bertrand' mentioned in the Richardson correspondence who acted as an intermediary when Cheyne fell out with his booksellers.

Cheyne's strong personality is felt throughout his correspondence with patients in which he often tries to shame them into keeping to his *Dietick Gospel* in a bantering, sectarian vocabulary, which shifts between mock-threat and intimate reassurance. His confessional tone encourages the patient to feel like a privileged member of a society of fellow feeling. The idealistic zeal with which Cheyne encouraged his converts won over the most unlikely followers. The Courtier, Lord Hervey, consulted Cheyne at Bath regularly from 1724-5. In 1731, he wrote with mock-indignation that he was 'prodigiously scandalised' by Cheyne's accusations of dietary back-tracking in a letter to another patient, Lord Bateman (for whom Cheyne wrote The English Malady):

> If you were as just to *my* practice as I am to *your* doctrine, it would be impossible for you, whilst I always acknowledge and rever you as the great Aesculapius of this age and country, to speak of me as an apostate, a heretic or even a schismatic to your medical religion. In order therfore to set you right, and to let you know who is one of your most pious votaries, I write this letter to let you know the method I am in.[63]

He then reports that he drinks only water and milky tea, shuns butter, salt, spiced sauces, and red meat and he avoids all flesh two days a week. As a consequence he boasts of throwing off a fever in four days that

> would have stuck by a true beef and pork-eater as many months...After this recent account of myself, I expect you should compare me no-more to *Mahomet's Tomb*, because I think my rigid perseverance in this faith entitles me, in the heaven of Health, to the place immediately next to the Angel Gabriel...you have not a greater admirer and more sincere well-wisher...I have not bragged of the persecutions I have suffered in this cause: but the attacks made upon me by ignorance, impertinence and gluttony, are innumerable and incredible.

Hervey relishes the adoption of Cheyne's own bantering vocabulary of social martyrdom.

The same genial response to Cheyne's admonishment is felt in an exchange with Lord George Lyttelton, the poet and statesman, who writing to Pope in December 1734, describes being under Cheyne's medical management:

> [I], must desire you for the future to consider me as being, next to the Royal Family, the most incapable of Sickness, pain, or any bodily infirmity, of all the Men you ever knew excepting only the Immortal Doctor Cheney [sic], who desires his compliments to you, and bids me to tell you that he shall live at least two centuries by being a Real and practical Philosopher as You, Dr Swift and my Lord Bolingbroke die of eating and Drinking at Fourscore (Corr., p. 47).

Lyttelton gently mocks Cheyne's obsession with longevity through this ironic allusion to myths of royal immunity from disease, itself a jibe at the contemporary court. Like

---

[63] Earl of Ilchester, Lord Hervey and his Friends, pp. 151-2. In the summer of 1726, Hervey wrote of his affection to his lover, Stephen Fox, 'your Reservedness I fear will make it live upon as slender Dyet as a patient of Dr Cheyne's'. R. Halsband, Lord Hervey, pp. 56-7; 61-2; 76; 233, and 292.

many, he found Cheyne to be 'the greatest Singularity, and the most Delightful I ever met with. I am not his patient, but am to be his Disciple, and to see a Manuscript of his which comprehends all that is necessary, salutary or useful either of Body or Soul'. Cheyne had described Lyttelton's cousin, Lord George Grenville (who had also recently been under his care), as 'a Giant of Anack made like Gilbert Burnet, that is capable, if he wished, of living forever'. Lyttelton then entertains Pope with an account of his attempt to taunt Cheyne by exposing the circularity of his providential logic:

> This present Sickness being nothing but a fillip which Providence gave him [Grenville], for his Good to make him temperate, and put him under the care of Doctor Cheyney. When we tell the Doctor, that he always has been temperate, a water Drinker; and eater of Whitemeats, he Roars like a Bull, and says we are all liars; for had he been so, he cou'd not have had an Inflammation, which he is ready to prove by all the Rules of Philosophy, mathematicks and religion (Ibid.).

Other anecdotes also refer to Cheyne's bullish rage at having his medical authority mocked: Pope's friend, Lady Murray, writes to her Uncle, lord Marchmont, of the Doctor 'roaring around Bath'. On reflection, Cheyne was only too willing to confess to being the victim of a naturally fiery temper which made him vulnerable to such teasing.

Even his most devoted followers sometimes complained that he did not always practice what he preached. Turning Cheyne's arguments on their head, his self-confessed *Disciple*, Lady Grisell Baillie, noted that 'for all Dr Cheyne's skill I'm sure he ruins him self by his Tea Drinking. I think it would have been more natural for him to fall out with his Tea, than with his bread and butter, but no-body thinks that which they like can do them hurt'.[64] A comment from Bolingbroke probably rested on deeper philosophical differences. Writing to Sir William Wyndham (20 Feb., 1731), he recalls the absurdity of Cheyne 'with a gallon of milk coffee, and five pounds of Biscuit before him at Breakfast, declaiming to Pope, and me, against the enormous immorality of using exercise to promote an appetite'.[65] A discussion of Pope's intimacy with Cheyne is reserved for a later chapter, but it may be noted that the poet made intermittent attempts to keep to Cheyne's *Regimen*, and on one occasion, (and not entirely facetiously), expressed his regret at Cheyne being unable to join him at Twickenham for an exotic vegetarian feast of 'Sallads and Yams, and Torja's, a sort of

---

[64] Baillie to Marchmont, 7 Dec., 1739 (SRO, GD. 158/f. 1257/46).

[65] He adds: 'but a much better casuist, and a much better physician too, the Lord of Cirencester, prescribed exercise to prevent indigestion...and to promote the most sensible benefit of insensible perspiration (Bolingbroke Papers, Petworth, as quoted in Mack, Pope, p. 371).

Potatoe or Chestnut from the Isle of St Christophers'.[66] In 1790 we find Mrs Thrale, convulsed in a rapturous fit of Romantic escapism, declaring that 'few books carry so irresistible a Power of Persuasion with them as Cheyne's do: when I read Cheyne I feel disposed to retire to *Arruchar* in the Highlands of Scotland - live on oat bread and Milk, and bathe in the Frithe of Clyde for seven years'.[67] The sheer abundance of such anecdotes underlines the degree to which Cheyne's doctrines were fashionable currency amongst the *literati*.

Cheyne's monomania could both entertain and irritate, but he was very sincere in his warnings to the poets that unless they lived temperately, they ran the constant risk of bodily and mental breakdown, especially as their intellectual and imaginative genius denoted delicate nerves. Cheyne gave a lecture on this very subject to his compatriot, James Thomson (1700-1748), author of the popular poem The Seasons, when they met at Bath in 1730. Thomson was probably accompanying his close friend, Dr William Cranstoun of Ancrum, whose detailed account of his successful treatment under Cheyne's directions, for a severe nervous collapse, was printed in The English Malady (1733) (Part III, p. 312ff.). Writing to his patron, George Dodington, Thomson records that Cheyne 'told me, that Poets should be kept poor, the more to actuate their Genius'.[68] Thomson, who had a reputation for convivial consumption, in a Scottish social circle closely associated with that in which Cheyne had himself overindulged, was contemptuous of Cheyne's precept: 'this is like the cruel custom of putting a Bird's eyes out that it may sing the sweeter: but surely they sing the sweetest amidst the luxuriant woods, while the full spring blows around them'. In this context, Thomson's recent biographer, James Sambrook, observes that Cheyne's 'notions of vegetarianism had found their way into Thomson's *Spring*, but not into his diet'.[69] He refers to lines 336-378 of *Spring*, in which Thomson, touching on 'the numbers of the *Samian* Sage', asks if Man 'whom nature form'd of milder clay' should 'E'er stoop to mingle with the prowling herd/And dip his Tongue in gore'. Echoes of Cheyne are also heard in *Autumn* (ll., 1131f.), when Thomson adopts an Horatian stance against modern urban *Luxury*, and praises the traditional virtues of rural simplicity with as much ardour as Cheyne in his medical tracts. Clearly, Thomson made a distinction between pastoral convention and personal practice, which the idealistic Cheyne was less willing to accept. Behind his strict advice to the poets of his acquaintance, we detect a distinctly romantic conception of the poet as a priest-like, inspired prophet or

---

[66] Pope to Ralph Allen, 1738, Corr, IV, p. 119.

[67] Thraliana, II, p. 778.

[68] 24 Oct., 1730, Thomson: Letters and Documents, p. 73. Thomson was patronized (as a tutor), by Cheyne's friend Grizel Baillie.

[69] Sambrook, James Thomson: a Life (1991), p. 107.

bard. Cheyne's sentimental doctrines of simplicity, sensibility, piety and naturalism, heralded what was to come in terms of literary aesthetics after the mid-century.[70] A later generation were perhaps even more willing to take Cheyne's romantic vision to heart. An Essay of Health and Long Life was one of the works which inspired Shelley's commitment to vegetarianism, and, unlike Thomson, he did take practical steps to keep his song sweet on a diet of water and turnips.[71]

---

[70] Todd, Sensibility Chapter 4.

[71] Shelley cites Cheyne in *Vindication of a Natural Diet,* one of several prose attempts to defend his adoption of the 'Pythagorean' diet from 1812 onwards. Shelley's vegetarian ideas owed much to Joseph Ritson's Essay on the Abstinence from Animal Food (1802), throughout which all Cheyne's works are quoted at considerable length (Shelley's Prose, pp. 81-96).

# 7

# CHEYNE AND 'THE ENGLISH MALADY'

"Who's this with nonsense would restrain ?
Who's this", they say, "so vainly schools the vain ?
"Who damns our trash, with so much trash replete ?
"As, three ells round, huge Cheyne rails at meat."
(Edward Young, *Epistle to Mr Pope*, II, 1730.)[1]

## 'The Author's Own Case at Large'

Amidst the success of his Essay of Health, Cheyne was to suffer another serious breakdown. The years of relative freedom from illness after 1711 were marred by the adverse effects of increasing obesity. By July 1718, Dr Keith was commenting that 'Ch[eyne] is indeed extreamly fat but yet has pretty good health'.[2] This was an understatement, for Cheyne was soon to weigh, by his own account, 34 stone! When Gay visited Bath in September 1722, Pope wrote 'now I speak of those regions about the Abdomen pray dear Gay consult with him [Arbuthnot] and Dr Chene, to what exact Pitch yours may be suffer'd to swell, not to outgrow theirs, who are yet, your Betters'.[3] In July 1723, when the antiquarian Dr William Stukeley was sketching plates for his Itinerarium Curiosum (1724), he wrote to a friend: 'I have taken a drawing of the Bath, I mean the King's and Queen's with all the stewed figures in them, and design to steal brother Cheyne's phyz, which I think are the only modern rarities I shall find'.[4] Cheyne's extreme physical condition became proverbial. Lord Balmerino scribbles 'Dr Cheyne is fat & unwieldy' in the margin next to 'Rules for the Obese' in his copy of An Essay of Health, and James Thomson talks facetiously in a letter of 'the Great Fat Doctor of Bath'.[5] Anti-Scottish prejudice coloured some jibes. The libertine satirist *Pillo-Tisanus* asked rhetorically, 'oh rare Doctor - I would fain learn, if Bag-Pipe Cheeks...Double Tripe Chin or Pot-Gut Belly, are the consequences

---

[1] Young wrote to Richardson in February 1745/6, 'Dear Sir, I ask your pardon for stealing one of your books. On turning over my cargo, I find Dr Cheyne among my other books' (Young, Correspondence, p. 223).

[2] Keith to Deskford, 5 July, 1718, Henderson Mystics, p. 160.

[3] Corr, II, p. 133.

[4] Stukeley, Letters & Diaries (1880-85), III, p. 249.

[5] NLS, Acc. 9345, p. 229 and Thomson, Letters, p. 73.

of this regulated Diet? Speak Dear Doctor !'[6] Critics delighted in pointing out that he could not even cure himself, but the objective honesty of the confessional, *Case of the Author* (a punning title), in The English Malady, drew many fellow sufferers.[7]

Exacerbated by the psychological effects of controversy, Cheyne's health again went into another serious decline. The effort of climbing a short flight of stairs to see a patient could prompt a near fatal attack of breathlessness. He was obliged to travel within Bath by coach, and when walking, he was accompanied by a servant with a stool to which he had to resort every few yards. His legs broke out in 'Scorbutick Ulcers', for which he took such large doses of a mercurial preparation that his shirt buttons and the money in his pockets were discoloured by his tainted perspiration. Through abstemiousness he remained fairly well until the midsummer of 1722 (or 3?), when he suffered a symptomatic fever, and erysipelas on his thighs. Being 'reduced to the last Degree of mysery', he resorted to the use of opiates, although he found that he had to continually increase the dosage to achieve relief. He hints that he frequently felt suicidal during what appears to have been another bout of near-insanity. A long therapeutic coach journey (to Scotland or Yorkshire?), and two years of 'Milk and Seed Diet', did not prevent periodic attacks of erysipelas and headaches, aggravated by gout:

> About the *Michaelmas* of that Summer [1723 or 4], I was seiz'd with such a perpetual *Sickness, Reaching, Lowness, Watchfulness, Eructations* and *Melancholy*, continuing six or eight months; that life was no longer supportable to me, and my Misery was almost extreme...At last, my Sufferings were not to be expressed, and I can scarce describe, or reflect on them without *Horror*. A *perpetual Anxiety* and *Inquietude*, no *Sleep*, nor *Appetite*, a constant *Reaching, Gulping* and fruitless Endeavour to *pump* up *Flegm, Wind* or *Choler*, Day and Night...a *melancholy Fright* and *Pannick*, where my Reason was of no Use to me: So that I could scarce bear the sight of my Patients or Acquaintances, that had not been daily about me, and yet could not bear being a Moment alone, every Instant expecting the Loss of my *Faculties* or *Life* and surely nothing but *Almighty Power* preserved them both, such as they are (EM, p. 346-7).

Treating himself with a whole pharmacy of vomits, foetids, gums and volatiles, he struggled to continue his professional practice in 'a wretched Dying condition'. Receiving contradictory advice from his colleagues, he concluded that he was the victim of a 'gout on the stomach' (EM, pp. 342-47).

Cheyne spent his earlier breakdown alone, abandoned by his fair-weather friends, but significantly his second crisis was a more social event. By the 1720s he had a large practice and a family to maintain. The latter persuaded him 'to go to *London*

---

[6] An Epistle to G---ge Ch-- ne, M.D., F.R.S. upon his Essay of Health (1725), p. 27, note o. Similarly: 'his essay is stuffed with errors as full of them as his Propria Persona is full of foul Humours' (Ibid, note c).

[7] Porter notes that 'case' meant 'body', EM, Intro, n. 130.

(where I had not been for many years), to pass the Dead of Winter among my Old Acquaintances and Friends, for Amusement and Diversion only'. Cheyne was afraid that he might be 'teiz'd' into changing his Regimen, 'and sneer'd at by the Freelivers'. Even if he never recovered, he preferred to die temperate, but rather than be thought obstinate, in early December 1725 he did return to London where he immediately called upon 'my very worthy friends Dr *Arbuthnot*, Dr *Broxholme'*, who brought Dr Mead, Dr Friend, Dr Douglas and Dr Campbell.[8] They persuaded him to abandon opiates and take 'Chalybeate Electuaries', but they did not urge him to change his diet: 'none had the Courage to press it' he later boasted, 'much less to urge it, in so *Insolent* and *Sneering* a *Manner* as some, who ridicule all *shame* and *Truth*, have though fit freely to represent it'.[9] By the Spring of 1726 Cheyne was recovering, although he developed further severe ulcerations on his thighs. He spent the winter of 1726-7 again at London, and a lasting recovery began the following spring. By 1728 he had lost about ten stone in weight and 'pass'd through a State of entire bodily Purification' of the kind described by the Desert Fathers as 'a *Cyclus Metasyncriticus'*. He was left, so he boasted, with his 'Spirits and Faculties as clear as ever', until his death in 1743.[10]

We know very little concerning these later visits to London.[11] In 1741, Cheyne told Richardson in confidence that the real reason for his 'last visit to London' (1727 or much later ? ), was 'a Secret to all the World except to my Family':

> I had been so exceedingly fat, unwieldy and overgrown beyond anyone I believe in Europe, that I weighed 34 Stone, this had so stretched my Skin and Belly that when my Fat and Belly was shrunk to common Size by my repeated Vomits...and inability to digest any Thing but Bread and Milk, my Guts fell out through the Cawl where the Spermatic Vessels perforate it and made a Kind of Wind Rupture which was some Years a Breeding unheeded...(LX, p. 76).

This was controlled by a truss, and regimen, and Cheyne now boasted more 'Clearness in my Senses and Faculties' than most his age (nearly 70). Lord Auchinleck recorded Lord Newhall's recollection of Cheyne's illness, when writing to his dissolute son, James Boswell:

---

8 Little is known of Broxholme (one of Pope's physicians), Douglas and Campbell, presumably all Scots.

9 Mead had just used his influence with Walpole to gain Friend's release from the Tower where he was incarcarated on a charge of Jacobite Treason.

10 EM, pp. 348-55.

11 There are no extant records to give a clinical insight into his illness beyond that available from Cheyne's own description. Unique external evidence of this visit comes from Lord Hervey's papers: in early March 1727, Hervey was very ill at his London house, where he was attended by Arbuthnot and Cheyne (noted in Halsband, p. 76).

> Dr Cheyne...having, by too full living, brought himself to that degree of corpulency that he had his coach made to open wholly on the side and was really become a burden to himself, came to the resolution to live abstemiously, and reduced his body thereby so much that he was obliged to be swaddled to make his loose skin clasp to his body.

Newhall also told of Cheyne ordering his friends to keep him to his diet, despite his depression, so that eventually 'he became inured to the new method of living and all his faculties returned, with all his spirits...and he came out a clever agile man, and continued so with a high reputation and a great business till his death.[12] His 'Case' became a proverbial tale of the dire consequences of gluttony. His recovery, measured by the ability to pursue a profession despite nervous weakness, was proof of both the efficacy of his methods, and the ability of a nervous sufferer to self-manage their condition.

Notwithstanding his 'confidences' with Richardson, Cheyne had turned his misfortune into a triumph by making his second crisis and recovery into an exemplary spectacle. By entering onto the public stage of London, Cheyne put himself on display as an extreme 'case' and in so doing effectively threw down a medical gauntlet to his professional critics. His extreme, indeed grotesque physical condition, ensured a theatrical impact. We might remind ourselves that at this period a financially impoverished individual in Cheyne's extreme physical condition might easily have been employed in a freak show. There was indeed, despite his quietist aspirations, something of the showman in Cheyne. There is a distinct air of pride in Cheyne's recollection that he had once been the fattest man in Europe. He exploited public curiosity to score both a medical and a moral point. When concluding the *Case of the Author* he ingenuously apologises to his 'polite and delicate readers' for his 'low tattle' and the 'egotism': 'but so various and contradictory have been the Reports of, and sneers of my *Regimen, Case*, and *Sentiments*, that I thought thus much was due to *Truth*, and necessary for my own Vindication' (EM, p. 362). The second crisis resulted in a significant reversal of movement, with Cheyne abandoning the relative isolation of off-season Bath, and returning to London. The social context of his second recovery informed his mature account of nervous illness which presents it not as a disease of the melancholic social outcast, a-la-Hamlet, but as a site of socially acceptable sympathetic discussion and fellow-feeling.[13]

Contemporary interest in Cheyne's 'Case' is reflected in the large number of times this piece was anthologised well into the next century. The Biographia Britannica, for example, is typical of many early journalistic notices, in quoting extensively from the

---

[12] 15 April 1764, Boswell in Holland, p. 228.

[13] For 'the English Malady' as a sociable disease see Porter, EM, Intro., p. xxxviii, and Mullan, Chapter 4 (on Sterne).

account. The editor typically remarks upon 'much openness, and frankness' in Cheyne's books.[14] As The London Magazine put it, in Cheyne's story his contemporaries were shown 'the Advantages of a Virtuous and Religious Life...Experimentally Display'd' (IV, p. 106). Dr G. Zilboorg, in his once standard History of Medical Psychology (1941), wrote that Cheyne's English Malady, marked a decisive step in the sympathetic view of mental illness as a treatable disease:

> Cheyne relates his own case as a clinical illustration, without false shame or the mysterious self-consciousness which is characteristic of our attitude toward psychological troubles even today...the otherwise traditional contribution of Cheyne cannot be given too honourable a place in the psychiatric literature...the truly distinguishing feature of this book is that it is supplemented "with the Author's own Case at Large." This fact is far more important than any theories or remedies reported by Cheyne or by dozens of his more distinguished colleagues' (p. 299).

This important observation has been endorsed by G. S. Rousseau in his recent biographical study, and by Roy Porter in his re-evaluations of Cheyne's place in the history of psychiatric medicine. Porter, in particular, has noted that although Cheyne gives a detailed account of his mental and physical torments, he 'does not present himself as a tormented soul, in the manner of such spiritual autobiographers as Bunyan and Baxter'.[15] Nevertheless it was Cheyne's influential Georgian reworking of this traditional literary form which was to provide a model of objective self-analysis for such divergent figures as Hume and the Wesleys, and was still impressing a professional reader like Zilboorg in 1941.

**The English Malady**

First published at London and Bath in 1733 by James Leake, and printed by his brother-in-law, Samuel Richardson, Cheyne's The English Malady had run to a sixth edition by 1735.[16] The English Malady, as its subtitle indicates, is a specific study 'of Nervous Diseases of all kinds as Spleen, Vapours, Lowness of Spirits, Hypochondriacal and Hysterical Distempers etc'. It was originally written for its nervous dedicatee Lord Bateman, who circulated it privately amongst friends. Cheyne explains that it had, 'lain finish'd by me, as it now appears (at least in the main), these several years past and was intended as a Legacy and Dying Speech, only to my

---

14 2nd. ed., 1784, II, p. 499. Other appearances include, The London Magazine (IV, 31 March, 1735) and after his death in Dr Cheyne's Own Account of Himself and His writings: faithfully Extracted etc. (1743).

15 Porter, EM, Intro, p. xxxix.

16 Sale, Master Printer, p. 157.

Fellow-Sufferers under these Complaints' (EM, p. ii). But in The English Malady such personal reassurances are offered in an atmosphere of moral panic:

> The perhaps indiscreet Zeal of some of my Warmest Friends who (upon the late Frequency and Daily Encrease of wanton and uncommon self-murderers, produc'd mostly by this Distemper and their Blasphemous and Frantic Apologies grafted on the Principles of the Infidels and propagated by their Disciples), ex orted it from me to try what a little more just and solid Philosophy, join'd to a Method of Cure, and the proper Medicines could do, to put a stop to so universal a Lunacy and Madness (p. ii-iii).

When Cheyne's freethinking rival, Dr Thomas Morgan, published a translation of Pessarano's Philosophical Dissertation on Death (1733), an apology for suicide, Cheyne's associate and patient, the pious dissenter Samuel Chandler, opposed him in two tracts. The traditional rhetoric of the sceptic against the enthusiast was reversed by a sympathetic circle who shared Cheyne's fear that an apparent increase in cases of depression and insanity was symptomatic of a broader process of social and moral decline.[17]

Initially, The English Malady presents a sombre vision of an increasingly affluent island where few of 'the better sort' avoid the risk of going crazy. Perhaps this reflects Cheyne's own sense of personal dissolution during his second crisis, and his return to an overcrowded, expanding London, which he had probably not seen for some years. He tells us that his title is 'a Reproach universally thrown on this Island by...Foreigners...by whom Nervous distempers, Spleen, Vapours and Lowness of Spirits, are in derision, called the English Malady' (EM, p. ii). It was already a commonplace belief that the British climate produced a characteristically gloomy national temperament. Cheyne knew, for example, Sir William Temple's observations on the effects of the 'contrary humour' of the inhabitants of an island one foreign physician had called 'the region of the Spleen'.[18] In 1724, Cheyne had condemned 'the Frequency of Self-Murders here, in England especially', and insisted that, 'all self-murderers are first distracted and distempered in their intellectual faculties' (EH, p. 181). His coup in 1733 was to exploit this hint of a positive side to 'the English Malady', and turn a slur on the national character into a compliment upon native ingenuity, sensitivity, and originality.

---

17 Cheyne's fear that a national susceptibility to nervous distempers resulted in a peculiarly high number of suicides was shared by many of his contemporaries. Moore (pp. 182-188 and 201-208), notes the similar sentiments found in Blair's poem The Grave (1743) (lls. 403-404), and Edward Young's The Complaint: or Night Thoughts (1743), (v. ll. 442-446). Studies of this social phenomenon are collated in Porter, Mind Forg'd Manacles, pp. 81-9.

18 Temple blamed the uncertainty of the weather for making the English 'unequal in our humours, uncertain in our Passions, and uncertain in our ends', but the same phenomen[on] explains why 'we' make such good comic actors and dramatists. See Works (1757), II, pp. 348-9.

Cheyne insisted that he was offering an enlightened study: 'I hope I have explain'd the Nature and Causes of Nervous Distempers (which have hitherto been reckon'd Witchcraft, Enchantment, Sorcery, and Possession, and have been the constant resource of ignorance) from the Principles easy, natural, and intelligible, deduc'd from the best and soundest Natural Philosophy' (EM, p. x). Introducing the reprint of The English Malady, Roy Porter offers a comprehensive summary of how Cheyne employs essentially iatro-mechanical principles to explain why a mal-regimen weakens the nerves. He concludes that 'Cheyne...adumbrated a comprehensive and internally consistent physiology of veins and vessels, fibres and food, which rooted nervous disorders squarely in the body'.[19] Porter also describes The English Malady as superficially, Cheyne's most 'secular' work.[20] It is true that except for the *Case of the Author* and some remarks on simple medicine in the conclusion, it betrays little of Cheyne's mystical-millennialist concerns which resurface with a vengeance in the *Conjectures* in An Essay on Regimen (1740). Porter asserts that Cheyne was in keeping with other members of the post-Revolution, Anglican elite in rejecting the notion that infection of the soul was the consequence of Satanic possession; the idea that Satan was so powerful, having radical socio-political implications which they wished to reject (EM, Intro, p. xxxvi). The account of Cheyne's quietism presented earlier, supports Porter's assertion that for all his 'mystical' contacts, Cheyne never radically abandoned an outward conformity to the Anglican establishment. His heterodox, highly optimistic theology emphasised human perfectibility at the expense of any hint of original sin. If privately Cheyne did not underestimate the power of the Devil, neither did he equate melancholia with holiness. When George Baillie was depressed by deafness in 1732, Cheyne urged him to employ a 'Trumpet, writeing, fingers [and] signs', to 'keep up Conversation': 'I change you not to give it up, for if melancholy shou'd ensue as it infallibly wou'd, that w[oul]d be a worse disease than any you have had. Ride much be in the air, be cheerful and gay. The Trinity [of the ?] Spirit are joy, peace and Love. I am sure all that...anyone who loves God to lowness, melancholy or distraction is of the Evil Principle'.[21] *The English Malady*, was not a disease of religious withdrawal but of sociability.

In contrast to Porter's account of Cheyne's secularity, Anita Guerrini has argued that Cheyne's account of nerve function in The English Malady, in so far as it reveals his continued resistance to any reductionist, materialist explanations of matter-spirit

---

19 EM, Intro., pp. xix-xxvi.

20 Porter, EM, Intro., p.iv.

21 Cheyne to Baillie, undated (1730s). Writing to Baillie in November 1733, Cheyne talks of being a coward who is naturally afraid of 'the dungeon, death and the Devil' (Mellerstain).

interaction, is in keeping with what she, somewhat crudely, defines as his continued 'Platonic' adherences to spirituality.[22] As noted in the previous chapter, in his 1724 account of the Passions, Cheyne described a basic 'law' of mind-body interaction as a one-to-one mechanistic correlation between 'Motions' in the one and the other, but he was undecided about the precise way such interaction is mediated (EH, p. 149). As Guerrini explains, Newton had already hinted, in query 24 of his revised Opticks (1717), that the aether might be the cause of animal motion (not in a simplistic hydraulic sense as 'nervous fluid' flowing through hollow nerves, but in terms of 'vibrations' along solid nerves), but Cheyne, unlike Mead, did not take up this idea. However, Cheyne's concern to keep matter and spirit closely allied, had led him in 1715, to anticipate Newton's reintroduction of the aether as an explanatory medium of short-range particulate attraction. Guerrini notes that Mead's pupil, Nicholas Robinson, took up Cheyne's suggestion of a self-moving soul in his New System of the Spleen, Vapours and Hypochondriac Melancholy (1729), which follows an essentially iatro-mechanical, Newtonian path through familiar territory. Robinson equated the motive principle of the soul (Cheyne's 'Passions'), with Newton's 'animal aether', which served to link spiritual force and matter. It should be added that Robinson probably had personal contact with Cheyne: his subsequent work The Christian Philosopher; or a Divine Essay on the Principles of Man's Universal Redemption (1741; enlarged 1748), is overtly Behmenist.

In 1732, the Irish physician, Bryan Robinson (no relation), in his Treatise of the Animal Oeconomy, made a materialistic identification of Newton's aether with nervous fluid. Cheyne took this debate up in The English Malady. where he vehemently rejects the common, but naive view that the nerves are hollow (EM, pp. 77-8). He employs a more poetic, musical analogy to describe the interaction of the soul and body:

> The Intelligent Principle or *Soul* resides somewhere in the Brain, where all the nerves, or instruments of Sensation terminate, like a *Musician*, in a finely fram'd and well tun'd Organ-Case; that these Nerves are like *Keys*, which, being struck or touch'd, convey the Sound and Harmony to this sentient Principle or *Musician* (EM, pp. 4-5)

He does not try to determine how the 'Impressions' of 'Outward Objects' communicate themselves along the nerves to the brain ('the Seat of the Soul'), but, returning to Newton's original image, he does talk in terms of solid 'nervous fibres' rather than tubes, and associates nervous illness with their lack of 'tone' or 'elasticity' (EM, pp. 62-70). Cheyne argues that Bryan Robinson's theory of a material fluid, no matter

---

[22] Guerrini, *Isaac Newton etc.*, pp. 241-3.

how rarefied, could never account for muscular motion. It simply leads to a situation of infinite regress in which we are forced into endlessly inventing more and more elastic fluids or we must 'allow [that] Particles of Matter [are] impress'd with these Qualities in their Creation immediately by the Supreme Being' (Ibid., p. 84). Cheyne upholds Newton's general idea that 'an infinitely subtil, elastic Fluid, or Spirit' is 'distended through the Whole *System'* of creation as the best explanation of how immaterial spirit and gross matter connect. As Guerrini argues, Cheyne believed that Newton had intended to use the aether merely to confirm God's direct activity in the universe, and therefore 'far from rejecting either Newton or mechanism, Cheyne's vitalism was a logical development of certain Newtonian ideas'.[23]

In 1733, Cheyne rejects the theological consequences of what he perceived to be Bryan Robinson's materialism. Instead, he emphasises that 'the Intelligent Principle' and 'the organical Machin [sic]' are essentially and radically different. Physicians are familiar with the remarkable effects of the sudden or accidental excitation of the Passions upon the animal functions. Apart from obvious physical effects, like raising the pulse and perspiration, they may even destroy life, or restore a person from death (EM, pp. 68-9). He cites the extraordinary case of one Colonel Townshend to prove his point (printed in EM, Part III, p. 307f.). Cheyne had joined a party of physicians who were asked to offer the Colonel 'some account of an odd sensation, he had for some Time observed and felt in himself: which was that composing himself, he cou'd *die* or *expire*, when he pleas'd, and yet by an *Effort*, or some how, he could come to life again'. Although he 'went away fully satisfied', that Townshend was actually able to imitate death through the control of his autonomous bodily functions, Cheyne was left 'confounded and puzzled, and not able to form any rational *Scheme*, that might account for it'. Discussing Robinson's aether claims, Cheyne cites Townshend's case as an example of how 'an *Effort* of *Mind*, restor'd to Life once and again...extinct Animal Functions':

> Now if the Principle of both Parts of the Compound were one, or if the Whole had a material or organical Principles, or if there were only an external Spring of Motion and Action, the Functions dying, expireing, and going down, the Whole would always die and extinguish. But surely no different or independent Internal Principle could restore, invigorate and actuate the dead or just dying material and animal Functions as in the last Case (EM, p. 69).

Townshend's ability to willfully imitate death indicates that the soul/mind does exert an essential (even conscious) influence over the body. Cheyne was undoubtedly aware that his account would suggest earlier descriptions of resurrection, as it later reminded the anonymous author of The Theory of Dreams (1803) (II, p. 3), of St

---

[23] Guerrini, Ibid, pp. 243 and *Keill*, p. 248-9.

Augustine's account of *Restitutus* in De Civitate Dei (L. xix C. 24). Significantly, the French Prophets made many claims to 'miraculous healings' in which the dying or recently dead were 'restored'. One of their great humiliations had been the very public failure of the predicted 'resurrection' of their deceased convert Dr Thomas Emes, for which stands were erected in Bunhill Fields in 1708.[24] Cheyne maintained a vested interest in the notion that the spirit can, in exceptional circumstances, act directly upon the body, and in 1733, he again managed to reconcile this with what he interpreted as being true to Newton.

If The English Malady superficially adopts a more 'secular' approach it represents Cheyne's pragmatic response to the accusations that his Essay was too idealistic and countenanced immaterialism. In 1733, when his pious friend, George Baillie, read the new work, he accused Cheyne of 'modishness'. The physician responded defensively by saying that he only ever wrote to please those for whom he has the highest opinion, even when, 'Self [&] Vanity came driveing in upon me', that he cared little for his 'reputation of learning, judgement or ability' and did not fear 'losing the opinion of the Disinterested'.[25] But a revealing anecdote recorded by John Wesley, suggests that an ambitious Cheyne did value his reputation enough to deliberately suppress his private beliefs. In the preface to his Primitive Physick (1747), Wesley praises the maligned empirical methods 'in the writings of the learned and ingenious Dr Cheyne who doubtless would have communicated many more to the world, but for the melancholy reason he gave one of his friends, that pressed him on some passages in his works, which too much countenanced the modern practice, "Oh Sir, we must do something, to oblige the faculty, or they will tear us to pieces."[26] Cheyne's career does not present a clear-cut process of increasing conformity, but a constant pressure to conform to established scientific and medical orthodoxies helps to explain Cheyne's efforts to accommodate his mystical-millenarianism within a version of an established Newtonianism.

The English Malady brings nervous illness within the compass of cure and removes it from any older notions of diabolic possession. If nervous symptoms are merely the result of clogged hydraulics, then the torments of mental disorder are only a temporary counter-pull on a spirit which, if left unhindered, would mechanically find its way back to God, by an innate force of 'spiritual attraction'. Cheyne was convinced that God did not create man to torment him:

---

24 Schwartz, Prophets, Ch. IV, 'The Legacy of Dr Emes'. Cheyne probably also knew the accounts of 'Engelbrecht, the German lazarus', published in 1707 and discussed in Hobhouse, pp. 357-9.

25 Cheyne to Baillie, 15 Nov., 1733 (Mellerstain).

26 Wesley, Primitive Physick, p. 27.

> I can never be induc'd to believe that the omnipotent and infinitely good Author...could, out of Choice and Election, or by unavoidable necessity, much less from malice and Impotence, have brought such a state of Misery, Pain and Torture, as the most cruel and barbarous Tyrant can scarce be suppos'd wantonly to inflict.. NO ! none but Devils could have such Malice: none but Men themselves, or what is next to themselves, I mean their Parents, who were the Instruments and Channels of their Bodies and Constitutions, could have Power or means to produce such cruel effects (EM, p. 25).

Our natural condition is one of easy spirits, spiritual contentment and freedom from pain. The healthy and virtuous grow healthier and happier whilst the bad are brought to see the error of their ways through the reforming pain of ill-health. The mystical religionist took on the role of medical demystifier, by arguing that the basic physical strength of the 'Nerves and Fibre' and the general 'Original....make of the Body', play a greater part in governing health than other factors such as 'Education, Philosophy or Religion'. Therefore, he can argue reassuringly that suicide is invariably the result of detectable physical weakness (EM, pp. i-iii). As Porter suggests, this was a convenient formulation for a Georgian elite, who did not wish to trouble their consciences with the concept of Satanic possession, and the associated political rhetoric of radical 'enthusiasm' it had accrued before the Restoration.

Cheyne argued that the moral danger lies not so much in nervous symptoms themselves, but in leaving nervous disorders undiagnosed and untreated. The resulting despondency of spirits could leave the tormented sufferer vulnerable to the seductions of infidelity. Cheyne was not unique (though clearly influential), in his claim that many cases of suicide stemmed from nervous sufferers being spiritually undermined by sceptical philosophy. Berkeley, for example, in Alciphron,...or the Minute Philosopher (1732), had just put forward the arguments of orthodox Christianity against the views of 'the freethinker in the various lights of atheist, libertine, enthusiast, scorner, critic, metaphysician, fatalist and sceptic'.[27] In the fifth dialogue, Berkeley's mouthpiece, Crito, remarks that 'as the minute philosophy prevails, we daily see more examples of suicide'. These sentiments are closely echoed in Cheyne's 1733 preface when he addresses the 'voluptuous and unthinking' amongst his readers, with the hope that 'possibly even they themselves may be convinc'd....when their proper Time is come; and sooner or later it may come, unless the Minute Philosophy prevail and become the Standard'.[28] Cheyne's preface reads like a response to Crito's charge that

---

27 Berkeley, Works, III, p. 23.

28 EM, p. xii. Interestingly, OED cites only one prior post-classical usage of the expression 'minute philosopher' in Berkeley's sense of the term before Alciphron.

> No man on earth ought to prize anodynes for the spleen more than a man of fashion and pleasure...something there is in our climate and complexion that makes idleness nowhere so much its own punishment as in England, where an uneducated fine gentleman pays for his momentary pleasures with a long cruel intervals of spleen; for relief of which he is driven into sensual excess, that produce a proportionable depression of spirits, which, as it createth a want of pleasures, so it lessens the ability to enjoy them. There is a cast of thought in the complexion of an Englishman which renders him the most unsuccessful rake in the world.[29]

Cheyne offered an alternative moral (and medical) creed to that of the 'minute philosophers' who, in Crito's words, use their authority 'to atheize one another'. In turn, Berkeley's Siris (1744) lent further authority to Cheyne's charge that suicidal nervous disorders are the result of free-living and free-thinking. Medically concerned philosopher and philosophically inclined physician both belonged to a strong Christian counter-movement reacting to the challenge of free-thinkers.

If nervous disorders are physical, they are also treatable and so Cheyne insisted that the self-management of one's health is a religious imperative. In his Essay of Health he had already warned that 'he that transgresseth the Self-evident rules of Health, is guilty of a Degree of Self Murder; and an habitual Perseverance therein is direct Suicide, and consequently the greatest Crime he can commit against the Author of his Being' (pp. 4-5). He held firm to this rigid doctrine, threatening his patient Richardson, that 'if you'll be...ridiculously negligent of your Health I will, in the next edition of my English Malady, put you in the list of Self-Murderers'.[30] Consequently the pious novelist tolerated ridicule from friends and family for the sake of keeping to Cheyne's precepts.

The argument that atheism was simply the final outcome of physical illness gave comfort to Christian orthodoxy. Cheyne was always claiming that his infidel critics were nothing more than the poor victims of the disorders he was describing as manageable: 'there was scarce ever a conundrumist that ever I have read but I could observe more or less of what we Drs now call Nervous or vapourish Symptoms in them..'.[31] This turns a potential threat to established religion into nothing more than an unfortunate, but curable disease. One suspects that Cheyne thought true atheism an impossibility, since he believed that any spirit, if it was left untroubled by nervous distress, would be mechanically 'attracted' back to the God-head. As a moralist Cheyne emphasises the necessity for those at 'the Fountainhead' of society to set a model of sane, healthy living for those below. As a Christian stoic, he argues that an individual has no right to complain about nervous illnesses resulting from an

---

29 Dial. II, 17, in Works, III, p. 93-4.

30 Mullett, Letters p. 33, Letter III.

31 Cheyne to Pitsligo, (1730 ?), SRO, GD 52/1435.

inherited weak constitution. The distempers of voluptuaries are self-inflicted through their abuse of the divine gifts of material plenty and free will: 'these monstrous and extreme *Tortures* are entirely the growth of our Own Madness and Folly, and the Product of our wretched Inventions, from the Poison and Ordure, with which for the sake of a little Sensual Pleasure, we forcibly and tyrannically cram our poor passive Machins [sic]'. Illness must be faced with virtuous acceptance as the result of a punitive providence correcting past transgressions of free-will. But by making a firm distinction between inherited and acquired constitutional weakness Cheyne allows for the possibility that not all nervous patients are idle voluptuaries.[32]

English susceptibility to nervous disorders is accounted for by local environmental factors stemming from the unique nature of our country and culture:

> The moisture of the Air, the variableness of the Weather (from our Situation amidst the Ocean), the Rankness and Fertility of Our Soil, the Richness and Heaviness of our Food, the Wealth and Abundance of our Inhabitants, (from the Universal trade), the Inactivity and Sedentary Occupations of the better Sort (among whom this evil mostly rages) and the Humour of Living in great, populous, and consequently, unhealthy Towns, have brought forth a Class and set of Distempers, with Atrocious and frightful Symptoms scarce know to our Ancestors, and never rising to such fatal Heights, nor afflicting such Numbers in any other known Nation. These Nervous Disorders being computed to make almost one third of the Complaints of the People of Condition in England (EM, p. i).

Emphasis is given to the prevalence of such disorders amongst the wealthier, more educated urban classes, as a result of unique social advances. An apparent increase of nervous illness amongst the younger generation suggests an historically degenerative process is at work: 'Now since this Present Age has made Efforts to go beyond former Times, in all the Arts of Ingenuity, Invention, Study and Learning and all the contemplative and sedentary professions, (I speak only here of our own Nation, and Times, and of the Better Sort, whose social Employments and Studies these are), the Organs of these Faculties being thereby worn and spoil'd must affect and deaden the Whole system and Lay a Foundation for the Diseases of Lowness and weakness' (p. 54). His detailed account of the effects of climate, diet, and exercise which affect nervous conditions creates what Porter has recently termed 'a geo-sociology of health and sickness'.[33]

Cheyne patriotically states the economic reasons for the recent increase in overconsumption: 'Since our Wealth has increas'd, and our Navigation has extended, we have ransack'd all the Parts of the Globe to bring together its whole stock of Materials for Riot, Luxury and to promote Excess. The tables of the Rich and the

---

32 EM, pp. 25; 18, and Part I, Ch. III.

33 Porter, EM, Intro., p. xix.

Great (and indeed of all Ranks who can afford it), are furnish'd with Provisions of Delicacy, Number, and Plenty, sufficient to Provoke, and even Gorge the most large and voluptuous Appetite. The whole controversy among us seems to lie in out-doing one another in such Kinds of Profusion' (pp. 49-50). In a common-place tirade against foreign *Luxury*, he condemns the use of highly spiced sauces associated with the fashion for French, Spanish, Italian, and Turkish cooking. Cheyne was unusual in extending his campaign for greater 'simplicity' to include a call for the humane treatment of farm animals.

> Instead of the Plain *Simplicity* of leaving the Animals to range and feed in their proper *Element*, with their natural Nourishment, they are Physick'd almost out of their Lives, and made as great Epicures as those that feed on them: and by *Stalling, Cramming, Bleeding, Lameing, Sweating,* and *Purgeing* and *Thrusting* down such unnatural and high season'd Foods into them these Nervous Diseases are produc'd in the *Animals* themselves even before they are admitted as Food to those who complain of such Disorders. Add to this the *torturing* and *lingering* way of taking away the lives of some of them to make them more delicious (EM, p. 50).

Cheyne's arguments anticipate those of present day organic farmers, but despite the claims of his carnivorous critics, he never prescribed an exclusively vegetarian diet (except as a temporary measure for the chronically ill), and he had no moral objections to the killing of animals for food. His was a ritualistic, purificatory vegetarianism, for which he found authority in Pythagoreanism, the Old Testament and the Desert Fathers.

Cheyne harked back to a primitive, patriarchal 'Golden Age' characterised by robustness and good health.[34] He portrays the history of civilisation as a process of decline from primitive 'simplicity' into corrupt decadence: 'When Mankind was simple, plain, honest and frugal, there were few or no Diseases. Temperance, Exercise, Hunting, Labour, and Industry kept the Juices sweet and the Solids brac'd...but Luxury and Intemperance having gain'd Ground thro' Peace, Security, Ease and Plenty, Diseases sprang up and multiplied. Exercise and Labour were introduc'd into their cure by Physicians, who observ'd the Health and Vigour of the Laborious and Active'.[35] Reversing a commonplace Augustan respect for the achievements of Classical medicine, Cheyne argues that an increase in medicines is merely a sign of a failure to maintain natural health. The Ancient Greeks and Romans 'were Healthy, Strong, and Valiant' whilst 'they lived in their Simplicity and Virtue':

---

34 One source for this was Temple's *Of Health and Long Life* (1702) which describes the healthy pastoral life of the Old Testament patriarchs before the Flood, after which the use of the vine and meat caused a rise in diseases. Temple points to the health enjoyed in similar cultures such as those of the Brahmins and Brazilians thus reinforcing this primitivist theory (Works, II, p. 395-6).

35 II, iv. See also pp. 175 and 156 for cultural decline and the emergence of diseases.

> But afterwards in Proportion as they advanced in Learning and Knowledge of the Sciences, and distinguished themselves from other Nations by their Politeness and Refinement, they sunk into *Effeminacy, Luxury*, and *Diseases* and began to study *Physick* to remedy those Evils which their Luxury and Laziness had brought upon them. (EM, p. 55).

The millennial decline of the Classical civilisations into 'Luxury' through 'Peace, Security, Ease and Plenty', forms an exemplary historical precedent for the Hanoverian situation.

Alongside diet and exercise, the medical effects of the air was another popular topic of debate. Arbuthnot published his Essay Concerning the Effects of Air on Human Bodies, in 1733.[36] But where Arbuthnot is theoretical, Cheyne simply offers a forceful account of the pollutants of urban existence:

> London (where Nervous Distempers are most frequent, outrageous, and unnatural) is, for ought I know, the greatest, most capacious, and close, and populous City of the *Globe*. The infinite Number of *Fires, Sulpherous and Bituminous*, the vast expense of Tallow and foetid Oil in Candles and Lamps, under and above the Ground, the clouds of Stinking Breathes and Perspirations, not to mention the ordure of so many diseas'd, both intelligent and unintelligent animals, the crouded [sic] *Churches, Church Yards* and *Burying Places*, with the putrifying *Bodies*, the *Sinks, Butchers Houses, Stables, Dunghills* etc. and the necessary Stagnation, Fermentation, and mixture of Variety of all Kinds of Atoms, and more than sufficient to putrefy, poison and infect the Air for Twenty Miles around it, and which in Time must alter, weaken and destroy the healthiest of Constitutions (EM, p. 55).[37]

This picture of mid-eighteenth century London as a scene of physical and, by analogy, moral stagnation, corruption and decay is comparable with Hogarth's visual images of claustrophobia and filth. In the mercantile capital, Cheyne witnessed the 'natural' hierarchical distinctions between animals and men, between one social 'atom' and another being pressed into distortion. His 'common sense' regimens appropriate to one's occupation, were designed to restore social as well as bodily harmony between naturally ordered parts. Cheyne is at his most (unintentionally ?) entertaining when he casts an almost Scriblerian eye over the degenerate contemporary urban social scene of 'Assemblies, Musick Meetings, Plays, Cards, Dice'. These vicious pastimes are the only exercise of some, and 'to convey', these idle libertines 'with the least Pain and Uneasiness possible from Motion, or slavish Labour, to these still bewitching Employments; Coaches are improv'd with Springs, Horses are taught to pace and amble, [and] Chairmen are taught to wriggle and swim along' (p. 52). Clearly Cheyne sought a reformation of manners.

---

[36] This formed the second part of a proposed 'magnum opus', dealing in turn with each of the non-naturals begun in 1725 with the appearance of An Essay Concerning the Nature of Aliments.

[37] EM, p. 55.

Throughout The English Malady, the condemnation of idleness, luxury, and intemperance is noticeably more vehement and exhortatory than in Cheyne's earlier works. In a long passage, punctuated by such phrases as, 'when I behold', 'when I see', 'when I consider', he adopts the cadence of an Old Testament prophet, heaping medical term upon medical term in an horrific vision of the physical torments facing the over-consumer. This wordy sermon on the tortured life of the intemperate concludes in a crescendo of moral indignation:

> When I behold with Pity, Compassion, and Sorrow, such *scenes* of Misery and Woe, and see them happen only to the *Rich* and *Lazy*, the *Luxurious* and the *Unactive*, those who fair daintily and live voluptuously those who are furnished with the rarest Delicacies, and the Richest Foods, and the most generous Wines, such as can provoke the Appetites, Senses, and Passions in the most Exquisite and Voluptuous Manner: to those who leave no Desire or Degree of Appetite unsatisfied, and not to the *Poor*, and *Low*, the *Meaner Sort*, those destitute of the necessaries, Conveniences, and pleasures of Life, to the Frugal, Industrious, the Temperate, the Laborious and the active; to those inhabiting Barren and Uncultivated Countries, Deserts, Forests, under the *Poles* or the *Line*, or to those who are Rude and destitute of the Arts of ingenuity and Invention. I must if I am resolved to resist the strongest conviction, Conclude that it must be something received in to the body, that can produce such terrible Appearances in it, some flagrant and notable Difference in the *Food*, that so sensibly distinguishes them from these latter (pp. 27-28).

For Cheyne you 'are what you eat'. He repeatedly remarks on this difference in diet between that of the robust labouring poor, whose lives he characterises by frugality, and industry, and the 'high' diet of the indulgent, but infirm rich.[38] The nervous diseases caused by the corrupt atmosphere of the modern metropolis may only be cured after the nervous victims have been 'rusticated and purified' and 'suck'd in and incorporated the sweet, balmy clear Air of the Country'. Cheyne's antidote to urban discomfort was a retreat to an idealised vision of pastoral order and purity (EM, p. 50).

Cheyne's earlier criticisms of contemporary 'Luxury' had not passed unnoticed. In the preface to Of Aliments (1731), Arbuthnot states that his subject was suggested by the interest in diet prompted by Cheyne's Essay of Health, which had caused 'sects in "dietetick philosophy"'. Fashionable dietary sectarianism was again ridiculed in the

---

[38] Cheyne later argued that 'there is no nation in Europe perhaps where great and opulent Families sooner become extinct, or change Lineage so quickly as they do in England', because of the strain put upon women to indulge in 'dangerous child-breeding...but this misfortune appears not to the Poor, the Neccessitious, or those of the Middling Rank; for no-where is there a finer or more numerous posterity than among the *Highlanders of Scotland*, or the native *Irish*; but to those who have all the Conveniences and delicacies of Life in the greatest Plenty and Perfection; and if *these* have *Posterity*, they are often deformed, diseased, stunted and short-lived. This therefore can happen only from Difference in their manner of *Living* and *Feeding*; unless we should say, that impartial Providence compensates the want of Conveniencies of the *poore*, by more considerable Advantages in another way' (NM,p. 277). Cheyne lends scientific authority to a primitivist myth of the Celts which was to dominate literature after Ossian.

satirical It Cannot Rain But It Pours (1724?), ( attributed to Arbuthnot). Referring to the young wolf-boy brought from Germany to satisfy the curiosity of the London virtuosi, (whom Arbuthnot accommodated in his home), the writer remarks: 'I am told that the new sect of herb-eaters intend to follow him into the fields, or to beg him for a clerk of their kitchen; and that there are many of them now thinking of turning their children into woods to graze with the cattle, in hopes to raise a healthy and moral race, refined from the corruptions of this luxurious world'. In his copy of the Essay of Health, Lord Balmerino scribbled in the margin 'Enthusiasm, an obstinate disease', but adds with Protestant confidence, that 'excessive severities, used by superstitious pilgrims, are hurtful to health, therefore they are sinful'.[39] Cheyne's call for temperance in An Essay, prompted many satires portraying him as an 'enthusiast', whose ascetic doctrines posed a threat to contemporary civilisation. The libertine verse satire by 'Pillo-Tisanus', entitled An Epistle to G-- ge Ch--ne M.D. F.R.S. upon his Essay of Health (1725 ?), for example, is a substantial piece (nearly 300 lines of Hudibrastic couplets, with 40 further pages of humorous prose annotations), presenting a flippant, freethinking, bawdy reaction to Cheyne's condemnation of Luxury and his theory of the Passions.

Here, Cheyne is reproached for betraying his own profession and destroying the trades that pamper to luxury. The cynical voice of hard-headed realism demolishes Cheyne's rarefied moral idealism and optimistic platonic 'whimsies', with a Mandevillian view of human society ruled by greed, self-interest and crude sexual appetite. The author asks ironically what will happen if idle consumption of the *beau Monde* is curtailed:

> Now what must those pretty fellows (who frequent the Coffee and Chocolate Houses about St. James's from Ten to Two, then from the Eating Houses and Taverns to Six; then from the End of the Opera or Play to Morning; -- and so round again) do with themselves, if they're tied down to a Mutton-Chop and a gill of Wine for each Meal ? - Why here's above two parts in three of our Time lost, unaccounted for, and above half Mankind thrown into an entire lethargy, or state of Idleness; idleness my friends ! - the Mother of ALL EVILS, and a common Text chose by all who make a farewell sermon at Tyburn. What must be the consequences of this chimerical Temperance, but rapes, murders, plots ? (p. 29).

He calls for the members of parliament 'who have not much to do in town but eat and drink', to put a stop to Cheyne's dangerous advice to England's youth. The effect on the economy will be drastic: 'these rules of stupid Sobriety will put an entire stop to the Circulation of cash; Mony will prove a perfect drug, and a pension is little esteem'd at C---t as good sense: Our Trade will suffer too; Trade ! the Life of Every Englishman; for Mony is to Trade, what the Blood is to Life; the stoppage of the

---

[39] NLS Acc. 9345, top p. 157; top p. 98.

circulation of either, is attended with Death' (p. 29). Ironically, behind this cynicism, is a vision of modern corruption similar to Cheyne's own. The difference lay in Cheyne's belief that consumption could be controlled within moderate bounds.

A year before Cheyne's Essay of Health appeared, his arguments against luxury had already been absorbed into a blatantly mercantilist, Whig eulogy, regarding the benefits of the Hanoverian Settlement. It is difficult to ascertain whether Cheyne was being flattered or mocked by his patient, Hugh Chamberlain, in the preface to his facetious Characters at the Hot-Well, Bristol in September and at Bath in October, 1723 (1724), (the dedication to Nash, suggests the latter). Chamberlain imagines how the present times will be seen by an historian three hundred years hence. He describes the increasing luxury of the recent 'Hanoverian Peace' and its attendant benefits of 'Liberty' and 'Luxury':

> But these things [idleness and luxury] having long ceas'd to be fashionable, and the more late and present ages becoming fonder of imitating their early Ancestors than those of the Age of which I am writing, by rising early and going early to rest, by using Exercise, breathing fresh Air, and by living on a plain diet, they have none of those illnesses these their Ancestors were affected with which more particularly made them frequent this Place. And indeed...it must be acknowled'd that during this period our country seems to have risen to the highest pitch of Luxury it ever was (xiii).

Chamberlain rescues Cheyne's doctrines from being interpreted as an attack *per se* on the Hanoverian settlement, but it is difficult to establish to what extent Cheyne agreed with this narrow 'Whig' interpretation.

Fashionable complaints like the spleen, were finding their way into the traditional neo-classical literary dialectic of country and city early in the century, as we may see in Allan Ramsay's pastoral comedy The Gentle Shepherd (1724), where Patie, the 'gentle shepherd' of the title warns his childhood friend Roger, who is going to France for a Gentleman's education, that the luxury of city life is not all bliss:

> But mony a cloud hings hovering o'er the bliss
> The Passions rule the roast; -and, if they're sowr,
> Like the lean ky, will soon the fat devour.
> The Spleen, tint honour, and affronted pride,
> Stang like the sharpest goad's in gentry's side,
> The gouts and gravels, and the ill disease,
> Are frequentest with fowk o'erlaid with ease;
> While o'er the moor the shepherd with less care,
> Enjoys his sober wish, and halesome air.
> (Act IV. Sc.ii.,lls 78-86.)

As noted earlier, similar cries are heard in the work of Cheyne's opponent Thomson. But for all the primitivist strain in Cheyne's warnings against *Luxury*, the physician was no Arcadian shepherd boy. Although his own exile away from the rural

environment of his childhood Aberdeenshire, amongst the taverns of Edinburgh and London, necessitated a period of relative social withdrawal to save him from physical collapse, he never encouraged a rejection of modern civil society. He did not become a hermit, a Desert Father, or even join his aristocratic Scottish friends in their quietist retreat at Rosehearty. After 1724, Cheyne made a deliberate effort to maintain that his asceticism did not pose a threat to polite social intercourse or the established order. In the Preface to The English Malady he boasts that:

> Some good natur'd and ingenious Retainers to the profession...proclaim's every where that I was turn'd mere Enthusiast, and Resolv'd all Things into Allegory and Analogy, advis'd People to turn to Monks, to run into Deserts, and to live on Roots, Herbs and Wild Fruits; in fine, that I was at Bottom a mere Leveller, and for destroying Order, Ranks and Property, every one's but my own. But that sneer had its day and vanish'd into Smoak (EM, p. iii).

It was deeply ironic that Cheyne should be attacked for being a leveller in the light of his strongly hierarchical conception of nature. If he was in any way an 'enthusiast', he was certainly no republican radical. By 1733, Cheyne is emphasising that his dietary regimen is based on patriotic moderation rather than severe asceticism: 'the Food and physick proper and peculiar to the middling sort in each Country and Climate, is the best of any possible for the support of the creatures he [God], has unavoidably placed there, provided that they follow the Simplicity of nature, the Dictates of reason and experience, and do not lust after foreign delicacies'.[40] Although Cheyne condemned the scramble to indulge in the material benefits of an expanding imperialist economy he did not call for a stop to trade as such, but merely for the careful control of individual consumption amongst an intelligentsia vulnerable, by their mental gifts, to nervous anxiety. Indeed, as noted earlier, Cheyne attacked the popular fallacy that nervous disorders, 'especially among the Fair Sex' are caused by the use of such 'Popgun' luxuries as 'Coffee, Tea, Chocolate and Snuff'.

In the words of Porter, Cheyne portrayed 'the English Malady' as 'a pollutant, a disease of civilisation, a success tax on a people flourishing as never before, affluent, sophisticated, aspiring, ambitious'.[41] If nervous disorders are the price we pay for a more advanced culture, than we must learn to live with them. Cheyne's description of the *English Malady* suggests a self-congratulatory social activity in which 'fellow-sufferers' can indulge in self-examination and sympathetic exchange. His regimen was aimed at social accommodation not radical reform or isolation. The nervous valetudinarian enjoys a 'green old-age' through 'innocent and entertaining *Amusements*, engaging and light Studies, and rational *Diversions* in a cheerful and

---

[40] EM, p. 156. See also pp. iv ; pp. 217-8.

[41] Porter, *Rage of Party*, p. 43.

affectionate Society' (NM, p. 309). Whilst he did recommend the virtues of a civilised Horatian retirement for the valetudinarian, he acknowledged that this was not within the economic means of his readers amongst 'the middling sort', for whom sociability and economic success were often synonymous.[42] In the 1730s Cheyne encouraged Pope's temperate habits in retirement at Prior Park, the Palladian home of their mutual friend, Ralph Allen of Bath, from where the poet sought to escape from 'the Madness of the Little Town', Bath, and the madness of 'the Great Town', London, but for all Cheyne's shared distaste for the vulgar crowd, he could argue that the 'company' at Bath could be as curative as the waters.[43] His aim was to enable nervous sufferers to control their symptoms with as little disruption to their professional and social life as possible. His *Regimen* aimed at allowing the patient to return to *common life*.

There is no overt evidence for the The English Malady being received as a blatantly political tract, although both the rhetoric of madness and the rhetoric of luxury informs polemic on all sides of party political debate during the 1730s. Cheyne's remarkably obscure party allegiances, in both civil and ecclesiastical politics, noted by Mullett as long ago as 1943, adds to the difficulty of making tempting political interpretations.[44] Porter, lumping Cheyne together with other 'Hanoverian nerve-doctors', has (with tongue in cheek), called him 'broad bottomed', for using shared premises to repulse 'the Tory calumniation of the Walpolean opportunity state as Bedlam. Their tactic was not to deny Albion's malaise, but to capitalize on it, putting the depressed and the distressed in a new light'.[45] In his stimulating Introduction to the reprint of The English Malady, Porter develops this thesis further, when quoting Cheyne's 1733 dismissal of the charge of 'leveller'. Porter

---

[42] Contemporaries like 'the Revd. Mr H- - - e', whose eulogistic letter to the Gentleman's Magazine, *Concerning Cheyne and Temperance*, (VIII, 1738, pp. 362-3), were quick to equate Cheyne's medical doctrines with Pope's poetic adherence to a related Christian and neo-Classical ethic of moderation: the letter closes with the line from Pope, 'Be temp'rate, and Happy for your Pains'. Pope's temperate precepts in his imitation of the IInd. Satire of the IInd. Bk.of Horace (1734), lls. 60-75, suggest Cheyne's influence. Certainly, Pope shared Cheyne's vision of a vegetarian 'Golden Age' in the *Essay of Man*, II, ll. 147 f. For the political significance of the retirement theme see Maynard Mack, The Garden and the City, esp., Ch. III. pp. 77-115.

[43] Pope to Bethel, 27 Nov., 1739. Pope welcomed the visits of Cheyne and Dr Oliver who both advised him to drink Bristol and Bath waters. See also Pope to Lyttelton, 12 December, 1739 (Corr, IV); Cheyne to Earl of Aberdeen, SRO, GD 33/64/8.

[44] In this context, G. S. Rousseau has remarked of Cheyne, and other eighteenth-century nervous doctors (Robinson, Hartley, Battie, Cullen etc), that 'they were philosophers and propagandists....before they were physicians, and this progress has not been noted by the historians as clearly as it ought' (*Psychology*, p. 177). Rousseau's failure to analyse the political implications of Cheyne's career may stem from the frustrating lack of biographical evidence.

[45] *Rage of Party*, p. 43.

argues that 'unlike many "civic humanists", Cheyne never sought to use the critique of over-sophistication implicit in his formulation of "the English Malady", as a stalking-horse for social or political reform...he was no political primitivist, no railing reformer, no Jacobite, no Rousseauvian *avant la lettre'* (p. xxx). This account of Cheyne as a Hanoverian apologist does not entirely resolve the fact that despite his obvious popularity with some, he remained under constant attack as an extremist. Cheyne represented a current of conservative social criticism which, despite its outward conformity, may yet have had its roots in serious disaffection. Cheyne's fulminations against *Luxury* could be interpreted not just as anti-Whig, but anti-Hanoverian. In 1732, when Cheyne was circulating the manuscript of The English Malady, he called his half-brother William down from Scotland, and placed him under the care of Dr William King, the Jacobite Principal of St. Mary's Hall, Oxford. When William met some fellow Aberdonians in an inn at Dorchester, shortly after his arrival in England, he interpreted his brother's medical unorthodoxies as a reaction to specifically English, as opposed to Scottish, cultural and moral decline. He openly implied that the 'English Malady' was the result of Hanoverian, as opposed to Stuart decadence.[46] Although we do not have George Cheyne's opinion on this delicate matter, the fact that a blatantly Jacobite interpretation of his doctrines was being canvassed in his own family suggests a need for caution before making any over-simplistic connections between contemporary party politics and the immediate sources of Cheyne's medico-religious ideology.

One suspects that quietism provided Cheyne with a convenient rationale for putting a disdainful distance between himself and the corrupt world of *Realpolitik*. Like Pope at Twickenham, from his retreat at Bath, the successful, elderly Cheyne adopted a contemptuous pose when faced with the crude squabbles of Court and Parliament. In August 1734, he is apologising to Lady Huntingdon that his expectations of 'the pleasures of a calm conversation' with her during an imminent visit to the Bath, may prove impossible when 'we are threatened with so much company...for the elections will drive multitudes here to wash off their perjury and punch, as the court pours down a shower of these dependents'.[47] Cheyne had undergone a long struggle to be able to adopt this cynical and perhaps hypocritical pose. If The English Malady is accommodating to an expanding mercantile culture when viewed within a broad historical perspective, at a personal level it was a hard won compromise. When Cheyne first arrived in London, as a Scotsman with a strong

---

46 George Skene, *An Account of a Journey to London etc.*, in The Miscelleny of the Third Spalding Club, III, pp. 151.

47 Mullett Letters (Hastings), p. 41.

Episcopalian background, a Stuart was still on the throne. The personal sense of marginalization which colours his account of his first crisis of 1705, must have been exacerbated after 1714. His later career outwith the London medical establishment depended upon creating a popular reputation largely through the self-advertising of authorship.[48] There are grounds for seeing a tension between acts of political accommodation in Cheyne's published texts, and the less orthodox *text* of his private biography witnessed in his close social proximity to Tories, Nonjurors, Patriots and Jacobites. In Chapter 8, it is argued that in the 1730s Cheyne developed sympathies with the Patriotic Opposition to Walpole's hegemony, but evidence for Cheyne's private associations with the forces of party political opposition does not overturn the general thesis that for many Cheyne's account of 'the English Malady', offered a convenient compromise for the 'middling rank', enabling them to accommodate themselves to the baneful effects of modern life. If nervous disorders were the price to pay for advances in civilisation they could also be seen as a fortunate sign of a privileged participation in that progress.

**Sensibility**

The English Malady should be read in the light of the general climate of opinion which prevailed in the early eighteenth century regarding, what Cheyne termed 'a Protean' group of diseases. Nervous illness was either obscured in the dark clouds of fearful superstition by those who still considered it a sign of satanic possession, or it was dismissed by the more sophisticated as mere fashionable affectation. Physicians, philosophers, social critics, and creative writers all contributed to a debate focused upon the issue of whether or not spleen, vapours, etc., were genuine physical ailments. In literature surely the best known description of the spleen as affectation is the case of Belinda in Pope's The Rape of the Lock (1714). The passage is too familiar to need quoting.[49] Although Pope sought medical treatment from Cheyne, the poet boasted that he had never had the spleen in his life.[50] Cheyne, was to turn the socially suspicious spleen into the socially acceptable 'English Malady', thus sanctioning behaviour which a generation earlier would have been considered anti-social.

---

48 Porter remarks on the 'paradox' of Cheyne's success as, strictly speaking, an unlicensed quack in EM, Intro., p. xiv.

49 For Pope's use of specific imagery common to many of the late seventeeth century medical accounts see Lawrence Babb, *The Cave of Spleen*, The Review of English Studies, 1936, 46, pp. 165-176. Lillian Feder also discusses Belinda's disturbing symptoms in Madness in Literature (Princeton 1980), p. 169.

50 See Chapter 9.

Modern scholarly accounts of the spleen have tended to blur the distinction between the eighteenth century use of the term hypochondria, with its roots in humoral pathology, and the modern definition which implies deluded obsession. Further confusion arises when, as may have been the case with Cheyne's patient, Samuel Richardson, genuine physical symptoms were exacerbated by a tendency towards exaggeration and affectation being reinforced by a physician. The fact remains that although nervous illness was a fashionable complaint, many eighteenth-century sufferers were the victims of genuine diseases (organic or otherwise), which in some cases bordered on or developed into acute and protracted mental illness. As Porter notes, although Cheyne helped to make nerves fashionable, he never underplayed the distress they could cause, and he was one of a growing number of Georgian physicians who argued that mental illness should be afforded serious rational attention and a more sympathetic attitude.[51] Cheyne reveals the prevailing attitude to mental illness in the 'Advertisement' which prefaces Part III, where he notes the difficulties he has had to face in his plan to publish testimonials:

> The Distempers of patients are Sacred...and nervous Distempers especially are under some kind of Disgrace and Imputation in the opinion of the vulgar and unlearned; they pass among the multitude for the lower degree of Lunacy and the first step towards a distemper'd brain and the best construction is whim, ill humour, Peevishness or particularity; and in the Sex, daintiness, fantasticalness or coquetry (EM, p. 260).

Countering the charge of affectation, Cheyne sympathetically asserted with the force of experience, that: 'of all the Miseries that afflict Human Life, and relate principally to the body, in this vale of tears, I think Nervous Disorders in their Extream (sic) and last Degrees are the most deplorable and beyond all comparison the worst' (p. 3). Life can be hard to endure for those who are left 'broken and dispirited' by a nervous weakness, melancholy, vapours or old age. Everyone, he declares, must know instances 'from the hero to the City Girl' of people succumbing to weak nerves and becoming 'dejected, oppres'd, peevish and sunk below the weakness of a Greensickness Maid or child' (p. ii). It is presumptuous to assume that human nature can sustain itself unaided against such afflictions. Cheyne reassured his readers that they need not feel guilty for being the victims of nervous weakness, but his attempts

---

51 EM, Intro., p. xxxii; and Mind Forg'd Manacles, esp. p. 89 f. Sir Richard Blackmore had earlier insisted that even if the causes of the Spleen 'be never so chimerical and fantastick' nevertheless the pain is real since 'terrible ideas, formed only in the Imagination, will affect the Brain and the Body with painful Sensations'. Feder p. 170 from Blackmore, A Treatise of the Spleen and Vapours, or Hypochondriacal and Hysterical Affections (1725), pp. 96-99. Mandeville offers similar arguments in his Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysteric Passions (1711).

to remove this stigma by treating mental illness as just another treatable organic complaint met with hostility:

> If I call'd the case glandular with nervous symptoms, they concluded I thought them pox'd or had the King's Evil. If I said it was the Vapours, Hysterick or Hypochondriacal disorders they thought I call'd them Mad or Fantastical; and if they were such as valued themselves on fearing neither God no Devil, I was in hazard of a Drubbing for seeming to impeach their Courage: and was thought as rude as if I had given them a lye and even the very best has been, I myself was thought a Fool, a Weak and Ignorant Coxcomb, and perhaps dismiss'd in scorn; and some I have actually lost by it. Notwithstanding all this the Disease is as much a bodily Distemper (as I have demonstrated), as the Small Pox or a Fever (EM, p. 260-1).

Cheyne's anxiety to dispel the taboo of nervous illness, led him to emphasise in his printed testimonials that the cases he describes were all ladies 'of Great Fortune and Eminent Virtues', or 'tender young Gentleman of Great Worth and Ingenuity'.[52]

In The English Malady, Cheyne adhered to what by now were conventional iatro-mechanical explanations of the physical basis of nervous disorders. Throughout our bodies, but particularly in the nerves, 'a too great Laxity or Want of due Tone, Elasticity and Force in the Fibres' will produce dysfunction.[53] Thus he is able to discuss the 'Protean' conditions of his subtitle under the single term 'nervous distempers', since he ascribes to all of them a common physical cause:

> All Nervous Distempers whatsoever from Yawning and Stretching, up to a mortal fit or Apoplexy, seems to me to be but one continued Disorder, or the several Steps or Degrees of it, arising from a Relaxation or Weakness, and the want of Sufficient Force and elasticity in the Solids in general, and the *Nerves* in particular, in Proportion to the resistance of the Fluids... (EM, p. 14).

If the difference between a spontaneous yawn and a fit of madness was merely a matter of degree, Cheyne nevertheless carefully divides nervous disorders into three orders of severity. The first two are characterised by a loss of sensation, and loss of voluntary motion; the third category includes 'Spasms, Cramps, Convulsions, Hysteria, Hypochondriacal and Epileptic fits' (p. 14). Significantly he makes no mention of symptoms which would be associated at the time with actual madness, such as delusions or mania and at the close of Part I he notes:

> Here were the proper Place to say something of *Lunacy* and *Madness*, being satisfied that the Methods here laid down are sufficient, and the most effectual for these Distempers; but designing this principally for the common intelligent readers, and those that suffer under *Nervous* Distempers, tho' not regularly bred to the Practice of *Physick*; and People under the mentioned Distempers being incapable of reading, or at least of serious and close Application, and these Disorders being the province of particular *Physicians*, or those appointed by the Publick for the purpose, I shall here put a *Period* to this part of the Treatise (EM,p. 254-5).

---

52 EM, pp. 267f. Noted in Porter, Mind Forg'd Manacles, p. 55.

53 Cheyne's basic physiological theory is usefully summarised in Porter, EM, Intro, pp. xix-xxvi.

Although Cheyne insists that even extreme insanity is basically the result of bodily dysfunction, he does not address himself to madness, but only to those who are capable of undertaking the self-management of their nervous conditions. He later confided in Richardson that he had felt obliged to repress the full details of his own breakdown in the *Case of the Author* 'for the Sake of my Profession and Business lest Patients ever after should have concluded me really Mad, which I was but a little Way from being, only my Senses and Sensibility were rather too acute and on the Stretch'.[54] Acute sensibility is presented here as a safeguard against insanity.

With a stoical call for pious resignation to divine will, Cheyne reassured fellow victims that it 'is a misfortune indeed to be born with Weak Nerves, but if rightly used and manag'd, even in the present State of Things (I meddle no further) it may be the occasion of Greater felicity: For, at least, it is (or ought to be) a fence and security against Snares and Temptations to which the Robust and healthy are expos'd and into which they seldom fail to run'.[55] Nervous sensibility demanded an ever-vigilant, appealingly indulgent, self-analysis. By turning a necessity into a virtue, Cheyne places a positive value upon what he has formerly described as a grievous affliction, in a very convoluted passage where the awkwardness of the syntax betrays the circularity of his reasoning (EM, pp. 21-22). Mullan, when surveying the medical literature of sensibility, observes that 'at certain points within the writings I am discussing, there is a perturbation or ambiguity unresolved by schemes of nervous sensibility' (p. 207). This is one such moment in Cheyne's account, where he uneasily equates 'weak nerves' with the positive qualities of 'refinement', greater 'sensibility' and increased 'intellectual pleasure'. Out of a marriage of physiology and quietism Cheyne forged this reassuring doctrine of sensibility, attributing a positive value to a circumscribed, controlled nervous vulnerability.

Cheyne claimed that some adults preserve the 'refinement and sensibility' of their nerve fibres after childhood. He emphasised that this is certainly so amongst the 'well educated and disciplined'. In contrast, the labouring classes, for all their vigour and health, are denied the same refinement of sensation: 'it is a common Observation, (and I think it has great Probability on its side) that Fools, weak and Stupid persons, heavy and dull Souls, are seldom much troubled with Vapours or Lowness of Spirits' (p. 52). Intellectual faculties require a sound body in which to function:

---

[54] Mullett, Letters, p. 94.

[55] EM, p. 20. Note the tacit withdrawal from any overtly political or perhaps millennialist statement implied by his bracketed aside.

> The Works of the *Imagination* and *Memory*, of *Study*, *Thinking*, and *Reflecting*, from whatever source the Principle on which they depend springs, must necessarily require bodily Organs. Some have their Organs finer, quicker, more agile and sensible, and perhaps more numerous than others.[56]

Cheyne later extends his hierarchical analysis, listing the physiognomic characteristics of various nervous 'types'. He distinguishes 'those who are quick prompt and passionate; are all of weak Nerves; have a Degree of Sensibility; are Quick Thinkers, feel Pleasure and pain the more readily and are of the most lively Imagination' (EM, p. 105). In fact he defines three distinct 'grades' of sensibility; the 'Quick Thinkers', 'Slow Thinkers' and 'No Thinkers' (Ibid., p. 182). In his conclusion he gives this hierarchy of sensibility divine sanction:

> There are as many and as different *Degrees* of *Sensibility* or of *Feeling* as Degrees of Intelligence and Perception in human Creatures; and the Principle of both may perhaps be one and the same. One shall suffer more from the Prick of a *Pin*, or *Needle*, from their extreme Sensibility, than others from being run thro' the Body; and the *first* sort seem to be the *Class* of these *Quick Thinkers* I have formerly mentioned; and as none have it in their *Option* to choose for themselves their own particular *Frame* of Mind, nor *Constitution* of body; so none can choose his own Degree of *Sensibility*. That is given him by the author of his Nature, and is already determined, and both are various as the *Faces* and *Forms* of mankind are (EM, pp. 366-7).

An intimate relationship exists between the principle governing intelligence and that controlling sensibility or feeling.

Literary critics have tended to overlook the degree to which these comforting, rigidly determinist assumptions, underpin popular, literary constructions of sensibility. When put into practice, they could sanction specific moral justifications for social distinctions, as when Cheyne reminds his patient Richardson that he should not worry if his nervousness makes him irritable with the servants, because it is a legitimate test of loyalty for the insensitive labouring classes, to have to patiently and good humouredly cater to the whims of their nervy social superiors.[57] Richardson is himself a good example of a member of a self-consciously aspiring middle-class for whom Cheyne's account of sensibility could easily be interpreted as prescriptive rather than merely descriptive.

---

[56] EM, p. 53. In *Of Health and Long Life*, Temple had argued that, 'the difference of tempers, as well as of age, may have the same effect, by the many degrees of perfection or imperfection in our original tempers as well as the strength or decay, from the differences of health and of years..'.tis easy to conclude....that our perceptions are formed, and our imaginations raised upon them, in a very great measure, by the dispositions of the organs through which the several objects make their impressions; and that these vary according to the different frame and temper of the others; as the sound of the same breath passing through an oaten pipe, a flute, or a trumpet' (Works II pp. 395- 6).

[57] Mullett, Letters, LXX, pp. 108-10.

Much has been written in recent decades on the significance of the eighteenth-century obsession with the nerves. The studies by Foucault, Rousseau, Byrd, and their followers document an apparent ambivalence in eighteenth-century accounts of nervous disorders, in which such complaints are presented as both a cause of acute distress, and a sign of mental superiority; an ambiguity at the heart of Cheyne's account of *The English Malady*.[58] John Mullan has recently presented a challenging deconstruction of this thesis:

> A typical device for the explanation of such bizarre and contradictory strategies...has been the description of an insidious and ubiquitous 'irrationality'. A single step beyond the myth of an Augustan rationality (the *Age of Reason*, no less), is an apparently subversive but in fact perfectly conservative thesis. According to this thesis, the fashion for the discussion and representation of nervous disorder in the mid-eighteenth century is a symptom of a creeping 'unreason' which haunts supposedly triumphant "reason". A narrative of hardly articulate fears and obsessions is produced, to be set against one of confident order and poise. Yet to describe "the dark side of the Enlightenment", the seething realm of "unreason" is to accept the myth of Enlightenment, the positivity of Reason. It is to substitute an over-worked teleology with a comfortable paradox.[59]

Mullan supports this claim with some cogent literary analysis of works by Hume, Sterne, Richardson and Mackenzie and a brief, but innovative survey of medical texts. Porter's introduction to The English Malady supports Mullan's thesis that the sensibility cult did not constitute a simple retreat from rationality into unreason; on the contrary. Porter shows that whilst Cheyne's formulations made nervous afflictions respectable, his account leaves the soul uncontaminated by disorders which are physical, mechanical and manageable with medicines and regimen. All that has been said previously in the present thesis concerning Cheyne's introverted pietism supports these arguments. Cheyne's belief in an immaterial soul or divine spirit meant that he saw vulnerability to the weaknesses of the fallen flesh as temporary: 'The *Soul* may be Serene and Tranquil, while the Body is in Distress and Pain...even the *Stoick Philosophy*, is grounded upon this Distinction' (EH, p. 145).

It is impossible to ascertain the extent to which Cheyne's theories actually encouraged neurotic emulation. Undoubtedly, his sympathetic attitude formed part of a progressive, benevolent approach to genuine mental distress, but it is tempting to think that his writings must have turned many mildly neurotic cases into obsessive hypochondriacs (in the modern sense), providing them with both a vivid list of appropriate symptoms, and scholarly reassurance that nervous weakness is a sign of an inherent superiority. Some contemporaries were aware of such dangers. Dr Robert

---

58 M. Foucault, Madness and Civilisation (1961-65), and M. Byrd, Visits to Bedlam (1974).
59 Sentiment and Sociability p. 202.

James notes under *Hypochondria* in his popular Medicinal Dictionary (1743-5) (to which Cheyne subscribed):

> No disease is more troublesome, either to the Patient or Physician, than hypochondriac Disorders; and it often happens, that, thro' no Fault of them Both, the Cure is either unnecessarily protracted, or totally frustrated: for the Patients are so delighted, not only with a variety of Medicines, but also of Physicians.[60]

This warning may have been in the mind of James's schoolfriend and collaborator, Dr Samuel Johnson when, in April 1776, he recommended Cheyne's books to a hypochondriacal Boswell:[61]

> I said, I thought Cheyne had been rekoned whimsical - 'So he was (said he) in some things; but there is no end of objections. There are few books to which some objections or other may not be made'. He added, 'I would not have you read anything else of Cheyne's but his book on Health and his *English Malady*'.[62]

A few months later, Johnson implied that Boswell might be 'affecting it [melancholy] from a desire of distinction', and reinforced his message with a further qualification: 'read Cheyne's *The English Malady* but do not let him teach you a foolish notion that melancholy is a proof of acuteness'.[63] Johnson may have objected to Cheyne's account of sensibility as privilege, and his whimsicality, but there is ample evidence of him acting as propagandist for the Doctor's pious precepts. In 1773, when Hester Thrale was in a melancholy fit over being excluded from a will, Johnson quotes An Essay of Health:

> Remit yourself solemnly into the hands of God and then turn your mind upon the business and amusements which lie before you. 'All is best' says Chene, 'as it has been, excepting the errours of our own free will'. Burton concludes his long book upon melancholy with this important precept. 'Be not solitary; be not idle'. Remember Chene's position and observe Burton's precept (Letters II, p. 117).

Again in 1775, Johnson cites Cheyne when insisting that she should send one of her Brewery clerks 'for a few weeks to Brighthelmstone':

> Air, and Vacancy, and novelty, and the consciousness of his own value, and the pride of distinction, and delight in Mrs Thrale's kindness would, as Cheney phrases it, afford all the relief that human art can give, or human nature receive. Do not read this slightly, you may prolong a very useful life (Letters, II, pp. 257-8).

---

60 Quoted from G. S. Rousseau, introduction to John Hill's Hypochondriasis, p. v.

61 Johnson contributed the historical introduction, and some of the biographical material to James's Dictionary, which was printed by Richardson.

62 Boswell, Life, III, p. 26.

63 Johnson, Letters (Chapman), II, p. 145.

An even more serious tone informs Boswell's account of Johnson's response to being questioned during their visit to Skye about the problem of keeping our thoughts both on this world and eternity: Johnson quoted Cheyne's personal 'Resolution' from the *Case of the Author*,and insisted that it 'should be imprinted on every mind'.[64]

Johnson's engagement with Cheyne's metaphysics is also evident. W. K. Wimsatt noted a significant number of citations in the Dictionary revealing Johnson's familiarity with the enlarged Philosophical Principles (1715), and Robert Eberwein has discussed Johnson's use of Cheyne's concept of *The Cone of Being* in the famous review of Soame Jenyns's Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil (1757), for The Literary Magazine (1757). More recently, Charles Hinnant has discussed Johnson's concern with Cheyne's analogies between infinite divisibility in matter and mental 'vacuity'. Cheyne's imaginative, metaphorical use of Newtonian theories to describe the Passions, provided a cue for Johnson's figurative vocabulary in his moral essays where, as John Wiltshire has recently shown, medical metaphors proliferate.[65] The similarities between Johnson's and Cheyne's prolonged experiences of physical and mental *dis-ease* become obvious to anyone reading Wiltshire's sensitive, balanced account of Johnson's concern with illness, physicians and medicine. Johnson approved of Cheyne's strain of piety, whilst being fascinated by his confessional attitude towards nervous complaints. Above all Cheyne had mapped what Johnson later called 'the arduous province of preserving the balance of the mental constitution' (Rambler 47).

At the prompting of both his real and his symbolic fathers, James Boswell read Cheyne's works with critical attention, finding amongst his whimsies, 'good precepts of temperance and a comfortable strain of religion'. He took practical steps to follow his instructions (purges), and publicly praised Cheyne, if privately he thought him 'somewhat of an old woman'.[66] Boswell was later to address himself to his 'nervous' contemporaries in his essays for the The London Magazine (1777-1783), written under the pseudonym 'the Hypochondriack'. He opens his essay, No. 5 (5 February, 1778) with the usual quotation from the spurious 'Problemata' of Aristotle associating

---

64 Boswell, Life V, p. 154. The motto is: 'To neglect nothing to secure my eternal Peace, more than if I had been certified I should die within a Day: nor to mind any Thing that my secular Obligations and Duties demanded of me, than if I had been ensured to live fifty Years more' (EM, p. 334).

65 W.K. Wimsatt Philosophic Words (Yale, 1948), p. 151; R. Eberwein, *Samuel Johnson, George Cheyne and the 'Cone of Being'* JHI, 36 (1975); C. Hinnant, Samuel Johnson: an Analysis (1988), p. 11-13; and Wiltshire, esp. Ch. 4 'Medicine as Metaphor'.

66 Boswell in Extremes pp. 69; 78. In a footnote the editors refer to Boswell's unpublished 'reading notes' (presumably at Yale). On at least one occasion Boswell uses the expression 'the English Malady', to describe his own hypochondria (Ominous Years, p. 300).

the genius of poets with melancholia.[67] He argues that 'Aristotle' irresponsibly discourages nervous sufferers from attempting a cure: 'I am certain that many who might have prevented the disease from coming to any height, had they checked its first appearances, have not only resisted it, but truely cherished it' (p. 43). We detect Johnson's critical influence here, and also when Boswell asserts that 'Melancholy, or Hypochondria, like Fever or Gout, or any other disease is incident to all sorts of men, from the wisest to the most foolish'.[68] But Boswell did accept Cheyne's division of humanity into those with varying degrees of 'sensibility', adding: 'it is not every man who can be exquisitely miserable, any more than exquisitely happy'.[69] Without Johnson's warning, one suspects that Boswell, like many of his contemporaries, would have been only too happy to let Cheyne flatter him into believing his hypochondria was a sign of literary genius.

Boswell recognised the value of Cheyne's sympathetic attitude to a class of painful and hitherto socially isolating disorders. As John Wiltshire has noted, Boswell's copy of The English Malady survives. Boswell was probably thinking of Johnson when he marked the key passage where Cheyne claims that 'nervous Disorders' are essentially 'Glandular' because he never found them in anyone 'who laboured not under some real glandular Distemper, either scrophulous or scorbutical, original or acquired'. As Wiltshire observes, 'Scrophula...has often been thought of as providing an origin for Johnson's later medical problems'. In fact, Boswell called upon The English Malady to defend Johnson's mental health, in his introduction to the Life: 'Let no [LITHE] men triumph upon knowing that Johnson was an HYPOCHONDRIACK, was subject to what the learned, philosophical and pious Dr Cheyne has so well treated under the title of *The English Malady*. Though he suffered severely for it, he was not therefore degraded' (I, p. 65). Despite Johnson 's misgivings, Cheyne had ensured that nervous symptoms were an accepted sign of artistic superiority, and ironically Johnson was himself a posthumous beneficiary.

In 1733, it was already a commonplace of both professional and lay discourses to argue that women were particularly vulnerable to nervous conditions.[70] Cheyne's account in The English Malady is not gender specific in this crude sense, although he does discuss the vulnerability of women to nervous complaints during and after pregnancy, and he did think that next to clergymen, female gluttons were the hardest

---

67 Boswell's Column; for essays concerned specifically with hypochondria see Nos V, VI, XXXIV and LXIII.

68 Ibid, p. 43.

69 Ibid., pg. 136.

70 See, for example, Mandeville Treatise of...Hysterick Passions (1711), pp. 164-6, and Stukeley's Of the Spleen (1723), p. 25. For discussion, Todd, pp. 19-20; Mullan, p. 220-1.

to reform ! However, as Porter has suggested, the very notion of sensibility in The English Malady is itself expressed in gendered language.[71] It is a stereotypically feminized construction, being the result of 'relaxed', 'tender', or 'weak' nerves, which are lacking a normative manly rigidity and strength. In this context it might be added that Cheyne's doctrines left him vulnerable to charges of weakness or effeminacy. We have just noted Boswell's rakish comments when away from the pious checks of his father-figures. The libertine 'Pillo-Tisanus' compared Cheyne to 'that species of Physicians call'd Men Midwives; a sort of amphibious Animals...or, more properly speaking...Hermaphrodites of Physick; at least 'till arrived to those years, when they commence Old Women'.[72] The charge of effeminacy is particularly blatant in the anonymous poem defending meat-eating from the Grub St. Journal 86 (26 August, 1731), where the 'trencher man' author alarmingly claims that he would prefer to be castrated by 'Cheyne's own rough hand...than heed the whims of his fat-head'.[73] Cheyne's career registers a shift in popular taste, in which the manly robustness of the libertine, Restoration wit, to which the young Cheyne and his mentor Pitcairne both aspired (by being 'sinfully witty', like Lovelace), was replaced by a polite, sentimental, feminized ideal of the man of delicate sensibility who seeks domestic retreat from a competitive public world of consumption.[74] In a later chapter it will be shown how in countering the charge of effeminacy, Cheyne deliberately cultivated a whimsically quixotic persona, which placed a positive sentimental emphasis upon the asexual qualities of childlike innocence or senile abstraction.

The obsession of such writers as Richardson, Sterne, Smollett and Mackenzie with a social vocabulary of the nerves is now a commonplace of literary studies. In accounts of this cult of sensibility, Cheyne's name has often been cited alongside those of other contemporary commentators.[75] As Mullan has most recently noted, a

---

71 EM, Intro, p. xli.

72 An Epistle to Ge--ge Ch-- ne etc (1725 ?), note 'h': in the poem proper it is argued that Cheyne's rarefied Platonic notion of the passions ignores sexual love which is the true source of health and happiness. It is suggested that he would be better employed finding a cure for the pox than recommending impossible precepts of temperance. Cheyne is called upon to 'Furnish weak man with proper Strength and Arms/ To cope with conquering beauty's Arts and Charms', etc. (pp. 15-16).

73 Poem printed in Appendix III. See also Grub St Journal, Nos, 360, 371 and 379.

74 One 'wit', responding to Cheyne's Essay Remarks on Dr Cheyne's Essay, by an F.R.S. (n.d., c 1725), teases him for not wholly abandoning the 'Flesh-Pots of Egypt', and that in his recantation 'like Lot's Wife, he looks back to the Days of Pitcairn and Oliphant, when he shews us how sinfully witty he would have been, but I hate enhancing any man's crimes, and therefore I will not say he was' (p. vii). Cheyne's place in the move from 'rudeness to refinement', is noted briefly in D. Duncan, *Scholarship and Politeness in the Early Eighteenth Century*, The History of Scottish Literature, II, p. 57.

75 Cheyne's centrality has been noted in Moore, passim; O. Doughty, *The English Malady in the Eighteenth Century* The Review of English Studies, II, 7 (July, 1976); Rousseau, *Psychology*, pp. 174-

survey of the writings of the medical authorities - Mandeville, Stukeley, Purcell, Robinson, Blackmore, Whytt, Battie, Adair, etc.- reveals the extent to which a number of commonly held ideas regarding nervous disorders were repeated, basically unchanged, beyond a little personal emphasis, throughout the century. But Cheyne's account had a number of particular qualities which encouraged popular adoption. He was the most widely read theorist of nervous disorders amongst the Georgian *literati*, and familiarity with his work was commonly assumed for several generations.[76]

Berkeley's medico-philosophical Siris (1744) includes a section concerned with 'whence this English Malady proceeds', which uses a very vivid image to describe Cheyne's scale of sensibility: 'the hardness of the stubbed vulgar constitutions renders them insensible of a thousand things that fret and gall those delicate people who, as if their skin was peeled off feel to the quick everything that touches them'.[77] Such imagery had became a mainstay of prose fiction as the cult of sensibility reached a peak in the 1760s. In Smollett's Humphry Clinker (1761), the nervous Matthew Bramble is described by his nephew Jery Melford as being, 'as tender as a man without a skin; who cannot bear the slightest touch without flinching' (p. 84). Smollett's Scottish medical training would have acquainted him with The English Malady, and other accounts of nervous disorders which influenced the *literati* of the Scottish Enlightenment.[78] Christopher Lawrence comments:

> In physiological theory Scottish medicine was characterised by its stress on the total integration of the body function, the perceptive capacity or sensibility of the organism, and the preoccupation with the nervous system as the structural basis for these properties...Through a theory of sensibility, physiology served to sanction the introduction of new economics and associated cultural forms identifying the landed minority as the custodians of civilization, and therefore the natural governors of a backward society. A related theory of sympathy moulded their social solidarity.[79]

Despite his initial estrangement from the Scottish medical establishment, Cheyne's work had an influence upon these developments. Belated recognition came in 1724, when his admittance into the Edinburgh Royal College of Physicians was sealed by

---

5 and *Nerves, Spirits and Fibres* p. 142-53; J. Todd, Sensibility p. 19 and p. 79; Porter, EM, Intro., p. ix and Mullan, Sen. and Sociability pp. 205-7.

[76] For repeated use of Cheyne's account by later comentators see Mark D. Altschule, *George Cheyne his English Malady*, in Origins of Concepts in Human Behaviour, social and cultural factors (1977), pp. 53-73, but be warned, this essay contains some gross errors and the passage attributed to Cheyne on p. 64 is not his work.

[77] Works, V, p. 66.

[78] D. Bruce, Radical Dr Smollett (1964), pp. 29 and pp. 46-66.

[79] *The Nervous System and Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, Natural Order: Historical Studies of Scientific Culture, pp. 19-20

his donation of a finely bound copy of An Essay of Health to the College library.[80] We have already noted the presence of Cheyne's works in the Edinburgh Physiological Library (Chapter 5). Although Hume may not have been writing directly to Cheyne in his famous autobiographical draft letter of 1734, he modelled this revealing account of his nervous sufferings very closely upon Cheyne's *Case*, which had appeared a year before.[81] The English Malady, was widely discussed amongst the younger generation of Edinburgh physicians and *literati*, many of whom, like Hume, endorsed Cheyne's hierarchical theory of sensibility. This influence is particularly notable in the work of Dr William Porterfield, who became president of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1748, and who earlier had been a member and sometime secretary of the Society for the Improvement of Medical Knowledge (later developed into the Edinburgh Philosophical Society), in which both Kames and Hume participated.[82] Porterfield employed Cheyne's account of 'the Case of Colonel Townshend' (EM, pp. 307-11), in the philosophical arguments of an influential two part *Essay Concerning the Motions of the Eye*, which he published initially in the series of papers promoted by the society between 1733 and 1744.[83] As J. P. Wright observes, Cheyne's discussion of Colonel Townshend's case provided Porterfield with evidence to support his controversial theories of functional dualism, in which he argued that although the body works mechanistically, it requires the mind in order to act.[84] Porterfield's work shows how the Townshend case could support a

---

[80] Also on December 10th, 1733, one Alexander Orme was granted an M.D. at St Andrews upon the recommendation of his kinsmen, Cheyne and Middleton (St Andrews Senate Minits, UY 452, iv, pp. 126).

[81] Hume, Letters, I, pp. 12-18. This letter was first printed by J. H. Burton in The Life and Correspondence of David Hume (Edinburgh, 1846). Burton's suggestion that Cheyne was the addressee (I, pp. 39-47), was generally accepted until E. C. Mossner re-examined the evidence in his *Hume's Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot, 1734: the Biographical Significance*, Huntington Library Quarterly, VII, 2, (February, 1944), pp. 135-152, where he argues that Dr Arbuthnot is a more likely choice. I agree with G. S. Rousseau (*IDC*, pp. 83-4n.), that Mossner's argument is 'unconvincing'. Anyway, I would argue that Hume modelled his account on Cheyne's and probably met him at Bristol or Bath before he left for Paris (and stayed with Ramsay).

[82] J. P. Wright, *Metaphysics and Physiology: Mind, Body, and the Animal Economy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, ed. by M. A. Stewart (Aberdeen, 1987), p. 271.

[83] Porterfield's 'Essay' appears in Medical Essays and Observations, III (1735), p. 60f and IV (1737), p. 124 f.; p. 222. It was expanded into A Treatise on the Eye etc. (1759).

[84] Cheyne's account of Townshend was also anthologised in works like the anonymous Theory of Dreams in which an Inquiry is made into the Powers and Faculties of the Human mind, as they are Illustrated in the Most Remarkable Dreams Recorded in Sacred and Prophane History, 2 vols, (1804), II, p. 43 and II, p. 122, 'On the Influence of the Body on the Mind in Sleep'. Or at an even more popular level in Nathaniel Wanley's, Wonders of the Little World or a General History of Man: displaying the various Faculties, Powers, and Defects of the Human Body and Mind (New Edition, 2 vols 1806), I, p. 4, under the heading, 'The Strange Consitution and Properties of Human Bodies'.

more organic theory in which the soul is seen as essential to life, and intimately connected to bodily mechanisms. In the conclusion to An Essay on Regimen (p. 305), Cheyne later endorses 'the ingenious Dr Porterfield's' account of the 'extreme Tenuity of even an organiz'd and compounded nervous fibre' in the Edinburgh Medical Essays. In 1735 Cheyne was in correspondence with Porterfield's philosophical opponent, Dr Andrew St. Clair, Professor of the Theory of Physic at Edinburgh. The respectfully polite but defensive tone of two letters in which Cheyne explains his method of treating their mutual patient George Baillie, suggests that Cheyne was aware of St Clair's opposition to Porterfield's basic theories.[85] In his 1740 lectures, St Clair urged his students to issue the challenge to any philosopher (i.e. Porterfield and Cheyne), who supports functional dualism that he should 'order, if he can, his own heart to move slower or faster'![86]

The English Malady was also read by the neurologist Robert Whytt M.D. (1714-1766), who as Professor of the Theory of Medicine at Edinburgh University from 1747, and President of the Royal College of Physicians at Edinburgh from 1765, was influential in promoting theories of nervous sensibility that were adapted into other areas of discourse during the Scottish Enlightenment.[87] Along with his rival Haller, Whytt is the most frequently cited late eighteenth-century medical theorist of sensibility, but it should be acknowledged that Whytt's basic vocabulary had already been formulated by Cheyne in the 1730s.[88] Despite Whytt's more accurate physiological observations, his account often echos Cheyne repeating, for example, almost verbatim, Cheyne's hierarchical concept of constitutionally determined nervous sensibility.[89] Well before the Whytt-Haller debate, Cheyne's 'Case' and his account of 'the English Malady' had served to legitimatize an indulgence in and social anatomization of nervous states. As Porter remarks, it had served to fling 'the doors wide open to the grand century of hypochondria'.[90]

---

85 Neat copies (forwarded to Baillie ?), dated Bath, 28 May and 21 June, 1735 (Mellerstain).

86 Quoted from St Clair's latin lecture notes in the RCPE, by Wright, p. 265.

87 J. D. Spillane, The Doctrine of Nerves, pp.127-139 summarises Whytt's achievements in neurology.

88 Whytt critically addresses the English Malady, in his influential Observations on the Nature, Causes and Cure of those Disorders which are Commonly called Nervous, Hypochondriac, or Hysteric: to which are prefix'd some remarks on the sympathy of the nerves. (Edinburgh, 1765), p. 109; p. 118 and p. 247.

89 Ibid., p. 113. Compare also Whytt's list of the predisposing causes of nervous disorders at Ibid., p. 9. Like Cheyne, Whytt hoped to remove the 'reproaches' attached to nervous illness. He made an important new contribution when he introduced the complementary theory of a nervous 'sympathy' existing throughout the body; an idea based upon his original studies of reflex actions which convinced him that 'every sensible part of the body has a sympathy with the whole' (Ibid..).

90 EM, Intro, p. xxxviii.

Cheyne constructed a conveniently reassuring, almost formulaic, medico-religious vocabulary, which permeates popular discourse on the self and feelings throughout the latter part of the century. As Mullan notes, 'for literary scholars considering the *origins* or nature of the cult of sensibility, this shared vocabulary of physician and literary disciple is of primary concern'.[91] As will be shown in Chapter 10, within a decade of writing apologies about 'the Egotism' or effeminacy of a nervous valetudinarian publicly rehearsing his symptoms, Cheyne was encouraging his nervous patient Samuel Richardson in the creation of a new form of fiction characterised by just such detailed, almost clinical recording of private fluctuations of feeling.

---

[91] He adds, in brackets, 'rather than the local ramifications of a professional debate regarding the actual physiological structure of the nerves' (p. 202) Mullan is specifically reacting to G. S. Rousseau's concerns in *Nerves, Spirits, etc.* Porter endorses Mullan's shift of concern away from the local debate about nerve structure, to the wider issue of mind/body interaction in EM, Intro.).

# 8

# 'AN OLD APOSTLE': THE 1730s

## Introduction

This chapter reconstructs Cheyne's social, political and religious associations during the last decade of his life. After Dr James Keith's death in 1726, Cheyne came to play an increasingly active role in projects designed to make works in the Continental quietist tradition available to an English readership. The network which had been established earlier between Poiret, Guyon, Fénelon, Andrew Ramsay on the Continent, and their associates in Britain such as Garden, Pitsligo, Keith and Cheyne himself, continued into the 1730s. By 1737, Cheyne's family were established in a large new house in Monmouth Street, Bath, which became a significant nucleus for a pietist movement which predated the Evangelical revival and had a direct influence upon the Methodists.[1]

In 1721, Cheyne had helped distribute the English edition of Ramsay's Life of Fénelon. This was translated by Pope's friend from youth, the biographer and Classical historian, Nathaniel Hooke, whose monumental four volume Roman History (1738-1771), was patronised by Ralph Allen, Pope, Cheyne and other associates of the Prior Park circle. Cheyne, Hooke and Ramsay shared a common interest in mysticism throughout the 1720s and 30s. Bishop Warburton described Hooke to Spence as 'a mystic and quietist and a warm disciple of Fénelon' who had tried to convert the Duchess of Marlborough to Rome, but 'after all he himself is only an odd sort of catholic, in his own Mystic way'.[2] When he died, Hooke left a number of unpublished manuscripts of a distinctly mystical nature which later came into the possession of Anne Berkeley, the philosopher's widow (herself an millenarian admirer of Fénelon, Guyon, Boehme etc.), and she circulated them amongst mystical scholars in England and America in the 1770s.[3]

Andrew Michael Ramsay (now styled 'Chevalier'), returned briefly from his French exile in 1729-30. Little is known of his activities but, he was made an F.R.S.[4]

---

[1] See Appendix IV.

[2] Spence, Anecdotes, I, 362.

[3] Anne Berkeley's letters to William Samuel Johnson printed in The Yale University Library Gazette, VIII, July 1933. The only Hooke MS to appear in print was *Six Letters to a Lady on Religious Peace*, published anonymously in A Contrast (1791), but under the author's name in 1816.

[4] Henderson, Ramsay, p. 131.

He had already been given an honorary degree of D.C.L. from St Mary's Hall, Oxford. The College Principal was Swift's friend, Dr William King, a blatant Jacobite poet and propagandist, who was instrumental in removing objections to the distinguishing of a Catholic, who had formerly taught the Pretender's children.[5] Another of Cheyne's Jacobite-quietist patrons, Lord Forbes of Pitsligo was also a close friend of Dr King.[6] Discussing Fénelon, King recalled that Ramsay had 'ever made me reverence the memory of this excellent man'. Ramsay used his visit to contact his quietist friends, including Deskford, and to court subscriptions for a translation of his philosophical romance, The Travels of Cyrus with a Discourse on Mythology (originally, Paris, 1727). A visit to Blenheim, with Hooke, formed part of a tour which included time at Bath with Cheyne. Spence records that 'Ramsay's Cyrus was translated by Mr Hooke in twenty days. Mr Hooke was then at Bath for his health, and Dr Cheyne's brother was so good as to write for him'. King told Warton that 'this elegant translation was made at Dr Cheyne's house at Bath, and that he himself had often been Hooke's amanuensis on this occasion, who dictated his translation to him with uncommon facility'.[7] At Cheyne's suggestion, Hooke, 'walked about the chamber and dictated to him, so that it was a sort of exercise as well as study'. He thus developed a spontaneous method, always taking the first heat, and if passage did not fall readily into English, to his mind, he marked the place and went on with the next, to keep up his warmth and freedom'. Hooke worked from the manuscript copy, correcting and altering 'many things in translating, by Ramsay's allowance'. Spence claimed that this "Cheynesque" method accounted for the fact that many readers thought Ramsay had written the work in English. It appeared in an 'elegant quarto' in 1730, with Cheyne's name on the subscription list alongside those of Ralph Allen and Dr King.

Modelled on Fénelon's Telemaque, Ramsay's The Travels of Cyrus presents a number of unorthodox theological and philosophical ideas inspired by his mystical interests. By 1729, Ramsay was already at work upon a *magnum opus*, which appeared posthumously as Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, (1748-9). The *Philosophical Discourses* Cheyne penned in the 1730s and published as Part II of An Essay on Regimen (1740), bear the marks of the philosophical

---

5 David Greenwood, William King: Tory and Jacobite (1969), p. 98.

6 King, Anecdotes (1818), pp. 236-7. Perhaps a little surprisingly (in view of their overt political differences), we find that Pitsligo was also on good enough terms with Baillie to present him with a copy of his Moral Essays (1732), (private collection). This friendship reflected a shared concern with pietism which transcended party differences.

7 William Cheyne probably took over when Dr King was unavailable. For resolution of anomalies in sources see Greenwood, pp. 97-8.

exchanges he had with Ramsay in 1729-30. In turn Ramsay's Plan of Education (1732), which opens with the assertion that, 'true education is the art of curing the diseases of the mind, so as to restore...our decayed faculties to their primitive vigour', reveals a familiarity with Cheyne's medico-philosophy. A year later, Cheyne sent Ramsay advance copies of The English Malady for distribution in France.[8]

Cheyne and Ramsay had a shared interest in trying to reconcile an extravagant form of Newtonianism with a mystical-millenarian restoration theology. Spence noted that, in 1729, Ramsay had made substantial moves towards answering Spinoza, had composed an account of the 'progress of human understanding', and had penned 'another high philosophical work', containing 'several notions that would have made him be looked upon as an heretic in our church as well as his own':

> His favourite point seemed to be that the creature in general has a resemblance to the Creator: that creation therefore was *ab aeterno* and infinite in extent - not matter infinite, but no point where there was not either matter or some created spirit; that there's an eternal pre-existence of souls; that the bad supply the world of brutes; that all things were at first good; that there has been a great degeneracy and disorder in beings; and that there will be a general restoration. This infers likewise no eternity of punishments- Plato and Origen his great favourites. The whole, says he, depends on these two principles: that God would not create anything bad, and if it became bad 'would not suffer it to continue so for ever'.[9]

Cheyne entertained virtually all these unorthodoxies in his *Discourses* of 1740. Hooke, who was later criticised for not doing enough to promote the posthumous printing of Ramsay's *Magnum Opus*, had misgivings about publicising possible heresies, telling Spence that 'some of Ramsay's most elevated notions', were, 'Like stars, when of too great a height,/ That neither give us heat nor light' (Ibid..). Similar criticisms were levelled at Cheyne's Philosophical Principles (1715), and especially when he published his abstruse metaphysical *Discourses* in 1740. Ramsay and Cheyne pursued a similar path away from what is now considered the main current of eighteenth-century academic philosophy, but it might be noted that when an obscure Scottish scholar, David Hume, was Ramsay's house-guest at Paris in 1734, The Travels of Cyrus and The English Malady were prominent, fashionable books.

Cheyne's younger half-brother, William (1705-71), was ably suited to act as an amanuensis to Nathaniel Hooke. His early career at a Scottish University and as a tutor, parallels that of George, who began to take a quasi-paternal interest in William.

---

[8] When Baillie was due to return from Italy at Christmas 1731, Cheyne told him that he would send copies as soon as possible 'but if you come by Paris (which I earnest for you doing as soon as possible), it will be there fore you, & shall be deliver'd you by Ramsay both in French & English, tho it will not be published here until about the beginning of February' (Mellerstain). Cheyne's opinion of Ramsay's conversion to Rome is not extant, but an aside in this letter suggests that he thought French 'Popery' only mildly less pernicious than that of Rome.

9. Spence Anecdotes, I, p. 468 (No 1274).

Aware that a Scottish degree was undervalued in England, Cheyne patronised William's attendance at St Mary's Hall in 1732-3.[10] In October 1733, Cheyne approached Lady Huntingdon to obtain an incumbency for William: an excellent young man of strict probity, a sweet easy temper, and excellent natural and acquired endowments...he was bred in Scotland, and there was distinguished by the greatest men for an excellent linguist, mathematician and divine'.[11] He assured her that all the heads of the houses at Oxford vouch for his character, 'there is not a Bishop of England but I could obtain a recommendation for him' and 'Dr King of St Mary's Hall...will say much to his praise'. William reciprocated with ardent fraternal support for his brother's medical philosophy. Touring England in 1729, their countryman George Skene recorded that at Marlborough 'we met w[it]h Dr Cheyne's youngest Brother who seems full of his brother's maggots & notions finding fault w[it]h. & convincing all phisicians [sic] since the Greeks not allowing among the whole herd scarce one faithful narrator or honest man'.[12] It was Skene who recorded William Cheyne's expressions of patriotic shock at the corruption of English manners, and the flagrant mistreatment of an elderly Jacobite by Princess Amelia during her recent visit to Bath (noted in Chapter 7). William's role as a valued member of St Mary's Hall, under King's particular regard, merely reinforces the hint that however we are to interpret Cheyne's outward conformity, sentimental Jacobitism continued to haunt his family and immediate circle .

Cheyne visited Oxford regularly during the early 1730s because his son John also attended St Mary's concurrent with William.[13] Their attendance coincided with the formation of the Oxford Holy Club, out of which the Methodist movement grew. Although there is no evidence for Cheyne's direct participation, members of this group became great admirers of the pious physician (of which more shortly). Cheyne had further connections with the Scottish enclave at St Mary's through his long-

---

10 William Cheyne matriculated at St Mary's Hall Oxford, on 27 March, 1732, at the age of twenty-seven. He graduated B.A. on March 12, 1733, and M. A., on May 2, 1733; Alumini Oxoniensis, ed. by J. Foster, (Oxford 1888) I.

11 Cheyne added: 'If I had not children to provide for, I value and esteem him so much that in my life he should never leave my family; and I thank God I am in a condition to be under no concern for him, and nothing but a tolerably good lifetime establishment shall ever obtain my consent to a separation...I, thinking it was time to settle him in the world, sent for him into England as he was going out to travel with a man of quality. I have had him at Oxford etc...(Ibid, p. 22)'. By 1743, William was the incumbent at Weston near Bath (Mullett, Letters (Hastings), pp. 22-6.

12 Skene, *An Account of a Journey to London*, Miscellany of the Third Spalding Club, II, (Aberdeen, 1940), pp. 117-157; pp. 151-2.

13 John Cheyne matriculated on April 8, 1731, graduated B.A. in 1734, and M.A. in 1737. He is described in the matriculation book as 'son of George, of London, Doctor'. A London property is not mentioned in Cheyne's will (Alumini Oxoniensis, I, p. 246).

standing intimacy with the border family of George Baillie of Jerviswood, and that of his wife, Lady Grisell Baillie, (the Humes of Polwarth). In 1738, Cheyne arranged for his patient Samuel Richardson to print, and distribute a four page obituary essay he had penned entitled An Historical Character of the Honourable George Baillie Esq..[14] Here, Cheyne attests to the exemplary character of a friend and patient of over thirty years.[15] Cheyne had finally attended Baillie at Oxford, where he died on 7 August 1738.[16] They had originally met during Cheyne's Edinburgh years, when Baillie was a political ally of Roxburghe in the *Squadrone*. In 1690, he had married Lady Grisell Hume, the daughter of Sir Patrick Hume, the Ist Earl of Marchmont (1641-1724).[17] Baillie spent much time in England attending Parliament as a representative peer for Scotland, but by the 1730s he became, in Cheyne's terms, a reclusive valetudinarian suffering from nervous fits and progressive deafness. His exemplary 'Case History' appears anonymously in The English Malady, (p. 275). Although reputedly a staunch Hanoverian Whig, after suffering the consequences of opposing Walpole's Excise Bill (1733), Baillie, and the younger statesmen in his family, became closely associated with the Patriotic Opposition.

After an adventurous youth following her father into exile for his implication in the Rye House Plot, Lady Grisell grew into a resourceful, and intelligent woman who spent many years under Cheyne's professional care. Two of her lyrics appeared in Allan Ramsay's Tea Table Miscellany (1724), and she later moved in literary circles in England where her daughter, (also Grisell, she became Lady Murray as wife of Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope), became a close friend of Pope.[18] Grisell's brother, the IInd. Earl of Marchmont, was a scholarly man but spent much of his life on the Continent upon diplomatic missions. She took over responsibility for the upbringing

---

14 It was reprinted in The Weekly Miscellany, The London Journal, The Gentleman's Magazine, and Dr Cheyne's Account of Himself etc. (1743), with an anonymous poem, *To Dr Cheyne on his Historical Character of the Honourable George Baillie; Esq'*. Cheyne also paid for the printing of 250 copies for distribution at Edinburgh, Bath, Oxford and London.

15 Thirteen unpublished letters of Cheyne to Baillie and his family (1729 and 1739, Mellerstain), reveal their intimacy . Lady Murray's letters to her uncle Alexander, the IInd. Earl of Marchmont reveal Cheyne's constant attendance upon her branch of the family, throughout the 1730s (SRO, GD. 158/1257).

16 SRO, GD 158/145/3 (i, ii).

17 In a letter from Cheyne dated 1 November, 1712, addressed to Lady Grisell's brother, Alexander the 2nd Earl of Marchmont (1675-1740), who, with his wife Margaret (1697-1722), had recently been under Cheyne's medical supervision at Bath, Cheyne asks to be remembered to 'Jerviswood and his Lady' (Private collection of Lady McEwen). Lady Grisell's accounts of a stay in London during January 1715, record the payment, 'To Doctor Shien 1.1.6' (Lady Baillie, Household Book...1692-1733, p. 31).

18 Cheyne was probably influential in interesting John Gay in Scotland's lyric tradition. Cheyne's pietism did not deny the pleasure of music. He frequently uses musical analogies in his philosophical writings, and he took a practical interest in Lady Murray's musical education.

of his twelve children after the death of his wife in 1722. His two eldest sons, the twins, Alexander and Hugh Hume-Cambell, were educated under the direction of Dr William King at St Mary's Hall, where Lady Grisell and Baillie often stayed during the 1730s, and where they were visited by Pope. Accompanied by the Marchmonts and Dr William King, they were reciprocal guests at Twickenham.[19] Hugh became IIIrd Earl of Marchmont in 1740, as one of Pope's closest younger friends and later became one of the poet's executors.

Thus there emerges a predominantly Scottish enclave, centred at St Mary's Hall Oxford, during the 1730s, in which Cheyne was highly esteemed. Writing from there in December 1737, Lady Murray's sister, Rachel, told her uncle of Dr King's 'aversion to all doctors' whom he believes 'only serve to peril and distract me' and that for his own part 'were he dying he would have no other but us and pronounces us more skill'd than all the faculty except Do: Cheyne whose faithful disciples we are'. Rachel, her sister and their mother, all adhered to Cheyne's medical philosophy and constantly endeavoured to get the menfolk in their family to abide by his principles.[20] Marchmont's sons, Hugh and Alexander, followed their father and uncle as active members of the 'Patriotic Opposition'. As Lady Murray reported to her uncle in 1738, such disenchantment led to rumours at Court where an anonymous Lord told the King that 'St. Mary's Hall was a nest of all the Scot's Jacobites who came there on purpose to support it..'.[21] Such accusations were inevitable when the college was headed by King, a blatant Jacobite propagandist who had just attacked the Court in his Miltoni Epistola ad Pollionem (1738), which was addressed to Lord Polwarth and dedicated to Pope. Hume Cambell and Hooke were consulted over the Latin. It is impossible to say if Cheyne, who put both his brother and son under King's care, was simply being loyal to a fellow countryman or acting out of more subversive political leanings. However these close Jacobite and Opposition connections of the late 1730s suggest that he was far from being antagonistic to those who actively opposed Walpole's hegemony, and those who, in some instances, openly avowed the Stuart cause.

---

19 Lady Murray's letters contain tantalisingly terse references to these visits (GD, 158, 1449/69/34).

20 A typical reference would be when Rachel tells her uncle in May 1739 that 'my sister is better...and this day in full company of any friends we have in this place [Oxford], goes out of her vegetable diet by licence under Doc: Cheyne's own hand and she begins by eating some of the finest Turbot I ever saw!' (SRO, 1449, 67). Two surviving letters to Cheyne from the IInd. Earl of Marchmont of 1737-8 discuss the effects of Cheyne's recent prescriptions at Bath: 'it is no small loss to me to be deprived of your good company as I must on a Great measure be at this distance...pray make my compliments to Mrs Cheyne and your Daughters...I need say nothing of our friends at Oxford you have letters from themselves' (SRO, GD. 158/1428/ p. 64).

21 She adds: '...Colin Campbell..contradicted him warmly and assure'd the K[ing] to his knowledge there was many there who both themselves and family's were as contrary to those principles as any subject he had' (SRO, GD. 158/1449/34).

Two obscure pieces of evidence lend support to the thesis that by the 1730s Cheyne sympathised with the Patriotic Opposition. Writing to Baillie on Christmas Eve 1732, Cheyne comments on the health of the Prime Minister:

> Your friend the Great Man, I think has had an Ugly Knock on the pate: an intermittent fever in winter at 58, under a Dunghill of putrifaction & luxury & perpetual baiting, wou'd be to me an overwhelm. I had it once but several years by Great Abstinence much evacuation & Exercise I got my head clear again in several years but hated Business & Application. If he is not jumbled mix'd & Turbid by it He must have a skull of Brass & a Brain of Fileings of steel (Mellerstain).[22]

This is not the comment of an admirer. In calling Walpole, Baillie's 'friend', at this date Cheyne was being deeply (and typically), ironic. His portrait of Walpole as corrupted by luxury was commonplace enough, but the analogy with a brazen statue was a particularly favoured image amongst the Opposition satirists who contributed to The Craftsman.[23] Whilst we should not infer too much from a comment that Cheyne might have directed at any gluttonous politician, this hint of disaffection with the ministry is supported by a unique allusion to politics in Cheyne's later correspondence. Hugh, (later IIIrd Earl of Marchmont), writing to Cheyne on 2 March 1738, reports that he had no fresh news of the proceedings in parliament, nor any new pamphlets which Cheyne will not already have seen, but he describes a recent debate concerning the Trade Convention with Spain, with the assumption that Cheyne supports the Opposition minority, who were dissatisfied with Walpole's appeasement measures after the disgrace of 'Jenkin's Ear'.[24] Whether this makes Cheyne a Tory or merely an Old Whig, is debatable, but surprisingly it is the only extant evidence we have of Cheyne's stance towards a parliamentary issue. Cheyne's patients came from all sides of the complex party-political divides of the period and his precise political allegiances remain obscure, perhaps through lost material evidence, perhaps because they were deliberately obliterated, or perhaps, as Roy Porter suggests, because Cheyne *was* simply an equivocal, 'broad-bottomed', social climber.[25] The rumour that Cheyne turned Methodist has proved easier to unravel, and the remainder of this chapter attempts to clarify Cheyne's mature religious associations.

---

22 Cheyne gets the age slightly wrong, but identification supported by evidence that Walpole had influenza after hunting over Christmas 1732, in J. H. Plumb, Sir Robert Walpole: the King's Minister (1960), p. 253.

23 Mack, Garden and the City (1969), p. 132; 274 and 132 note ii: In 1731 there appeared the lampoon Sir Robert Brass: or the Intrigues, Serious and Amorous, of the Knight of the Blazing Star.

24 'The Convention and Pamphlets pro. and con. you must have except the inclosed address which was carry'd in the House of Lords yesterday by 13 votes present and I think seven proxys. the D[uke] of W[ ]s voted against it and the Duke of Argyle spoke long and warmly against the Convention and address. The Commons are to be upon it on Tuesday next: the consequences are very doubtfull' (GD, 158/1489).

25 Porter, *Rage*, p. 43.

**Methodism and the 'Dietick Gospel'**

The popular association of Cheyne's medico-religious practice with the rise of Methodism is nowhere made more blatant than in the Fieldingesque comic-romance The Spiritual Quixote (1773), by Richard Graves, an associate of Ralph Allen's Bath circle in the years immediately following Cheyne's death. Although begun in 1757, the novel gently satirises enthusiastic aspects of Methodist activity during the 1730s. In a chapter entitled *History of a Long-Liver*, we meet the Methodist rector, Mr Slicer, a hypochondriacal, valetudinarian, dietary faddist, who entertains his guests with 'the History of Francis Hongo, surnamed Hyppazoli', who:

> died at an hundred and fourteen...Hongo was never sick; his sight, hearing, and intellectual faculties, continued entire unto the last. He would walk seven or eight miles every day. At an hundred, his white hairs are said to have turned black again; and, what is surprizing, having lost all his teeth, at an hundred and ten he cut two large ones in his upper jaw'.

This parody of Cheyne's admiration for famous longevists like the Italian, Luigi Cornaro (1475?-1566), author of Trattato della Vita Sobria (1558), forms part of a broader assault on medical-faddism.[26] Subverting Cheyne's notions of 'Platonick Love', Graves ends Slicer's account with the ironic afterthought that, although 'a man of great merit, wit and honour', Hongo had the minor failing of being, 'too greatly attached to the fair sex' and 'had, by his wife and two or three concubines, nine and forty children'. Slicer concludes his story declaring that '*the only way to preserve health, is to eat plain food*, says the Scotchman: *and the only way to destroy it, is to cram in such mixtures as you do in England, since French Cooks have been in vogue*', but later in Chapter XVII, (entitled *Rules for Health*), he warns that whilst health is a great blessing:

> too great a solicitude on that account is not only unworthy a man of sense and a good Christian, but is really destructive of what we are so anxious to preserve...I have read a treatise on sleep, that has kept me awake all night; and studied Dr Cheyne upon *Health and Long Life*, till I brought myself to the brink of *Death*' (pp. 344-5).

After a youthful attendance at an anatomy class and dabbling in medical books, he had brought himself 'by whims and apprehensions, and by tampering with my own

---

[26] Cheyne often mentions Cornaro alongside the Jesuit Leonard Lessius (1554-1623). Cheyne's concern probably prompted publication of Hygiasticon: or the Means of Health and Long Life written originally in Latin by Leonard Lessius. Now rendered into English, by T. S. Smith. whereunto is annex'ed Cornaro's Treatise of the Benefits of a Sober Life (1742).

constitution, into a very bad state of health'. A rector present at this conversation remarks:

> It is certainly better to be really ill sometimes than to be so hippish, and perpetually anxious about one's health. A friend of mine, a jolly fellow, finding me in my room with Cheyne's book upon health and Long Life before me, threw it into the fire; partly to cure me of my whims, and partly to repeat extempore:
>
> *I'd scorn the health, such rigid rules must give;*
> *Nor Sacrifice the ends of life, to live (p. 346).*

In The Invalid (1804), Graves was later to remark that he had once put himself in 'a valetudinary state of health' by following Cheyne's rules (pp. 22-26). In his novel, a schoolteacher leaps to the defence of Slicer's medical whimsicality, and the quixotic hero Wildgoose adds his own approbation of Cheyne's *Regimen*: 'in many cases, even fasting, or an entire abstinence from all kinds of food; this, at least, if made use of at the beginning of a disease, I have always found sufficient to check the progress, or put a stop to most complaints' (p. 346). Elsewhere in the book further attention is drawn to the parallel between Wildgoose's religious and medical unorthodoxy; between medical and spiritual claims to universal restoration or cure (p. 358).

Graves was reflecting the fact that Cheyne was by far the most prominent pietist physician to lend scientific authority to the asceticism adopted by the Methodists. Cheyne's practice, and his 1733 account of his spiritual reawakening, inspired the Methodist founders to practice a 'Primitive Physick' and 'Dietick Gospel', based upon a fundamentalist Christian conception of healing as a spiritual as well as physical process of restoration. Whitfield's famous conversion at Lent 1735, was precipitated by his severe adoption of Cheyne's ascetic practices. Significantly this was the climax of a period of soul-searching prompted by his reading of Scougall, William Law and the quietist, Castanzia during which Whitfield sought to experience 'the life of God' within. To do so, he deliberately imitated the austerities Cheyne had adopted after his own spiritual crisis. Writing to Wesley at Epworth from Oxford on April 1, 1735, Whitfield was in a panic concerning the low state of his health which provided 'the Enemy' with room to 'Blaspheme'.[27] He had just borrowed a copy of Cheyne's Essay of Health, having 'resolved some time agone...to consult nothing as to my eating or drinking yet but what should be essentially necessary for the preserving of my body in a fit Condition to serve my Master and fellow Christians'. With little time to 'revise him', he used Cheyne's text as a medical bible or oracle, 'providentially finding a place which I think exactly suits my present case & that is the 9th Chapter wherein he

---

27 Unpublished, unnumbered MS, Methodist Archive, John Ryland's Library, University of Manchester.

treats of persons of weak nerves, all the symptoms he gives of them jointly incurring in me'.[28] Fearing the onset of a chronic distemper, Whitfield described his symptoms in detail, asking Wesley to reread the relevant passage in Cheyne before offering his advice: 'Dr Cheyne I think prescribes such things as Herbs, Milk etc., for Spring which I would very readily come in with, having little or no appetite and hoping such a way would be a means of mortifying me to sensual pleasures and greatly to promote Christian Purity'. Whitfield thought that illness had providentially brought about 'a much better use of my understanding', which allowed him to keep the Devil at bay. His conversion experience followed very shortly afterwards, when physical weakness drove him to bed for seven weeks.[29] Cheyne's 'Case' provided a model for Whitfield's search after spiritual restoration or 'New Birth', and Cheyne's mechanistic account of nervous illness reassured Whitfield that his symptoms were in fact merely physical, and as such not indicative in themselves of either diabolic possession or spiritual growth. They were however a dangerous distraction to his 'understanding', by which he could consciously keep Satan at bay. At some later stage Whitfield probably met Cheyne, who contributed a rather stingy 'guinea' 'for the Poor of Georgia', when Whitfield set up a pre-embarcation fund in 1738.[30]

At least three of Cheyne's books formed part of John Wesley's reading during his formative years at Oxford, when his experimental interest in dietary regimens began.[31] On his sixty-eighth birthday, he attributed his longevity to a youthful adherence to Cheyne's principles.[32] Cheyne had encouraged Wesley to keep to a strict regimen which he had been tempted to abandoned as offensively over-enthusiastic.[33]

---

28 Revealingly, beneath Whitfield's crossing out, his original words read, 'but incidentally dipped in a place'.

29 Arnold Dallimore, George Whitfield (1970), I, pp. 75-7; Whitfield, Journals, p. 57.

30 L. Tyerman, Life of Whitfield, (1876), I, p. 106 (Cheyne's patient Lady Cox contributed £50).

31 V. H. H. Green, The Young Mr Wesley (1961), Appendix I, pp. 305-19. Wesley wrote, 'for six or seven and twenty years I had made Anatomy and Physic the diversion of my leisure hours' (Letters, II, p. 307). On 1 November, 1724 he wrote to his mother in praise of Cheyne's Essay of Health, and noted that Cheyne's assertion that health required temperance and exercise was 'much cried down by the physicians'. The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, (1931), I, p. 11 (hereafter 'Letters').

32 'When I grew up, in consequence of reading Dr Cheyne, I chose to eat sparingly, and drink water. This was another great means of continuing my health, till I was seven-and-twenty. The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley (1909); V, p. 373 (hereafter 'Journal'). Familiar with Cheyne's theory of fevers, John Wesley sought his guidance in November 1734, when stricken with small pox, he took to his bed for the first time in over thirty five years, upon the advice of Cheyne's brother-in-law (Letters, I, p. 359).

33 Wesley writes to Gibson, Bishop of London, in 1747, to answer charges that his asceticism has the 'appearances of an uncommon sanctity, in order to captivate the people', and explains that he had actually returned to wine and meat rather than 'make my brother to offend', but 'Dr. Cheyne advised me to leave them off again, assuring me *Till you do, you will never be free from fevers.* And since I have taken his advice, I have been free (blessed be to God) from all bodily disorders (I continued this about 2 years)' (Letters, II, pp. 285-6).

In his journal for 12 March, 1742 Wesley records: 'I read part of Dr Cheyne's *Natural method of cureing Diseases*, of which I cannot but observe it is one of the most ingenious books which I ever saw. But what epicure will ever regard it ? for the man talks against good eating and drinking?' (II, p. 534). By the 1740s close connections existed between the Wesley and Cheyne families. After being cured *gratis* of a feverish cold in 1740, Charles Wesley became an intimate friend of Cheyne's brother-in-law, Dr John Middleton of Bristol.[34] When Middleton died, Charles Wesley composed a memorial hymn testifying to the physician's piety. Unsurprisingly, Middleton was reportedly a death-bed convert to Methodism.[35] He died in the arms of his friend, Dr John Robertson, who had earlier been responsible for translating Cheyne's works into Latin, and who subsequently corresponded with the Wesleys.[36]

John Wesley's endorsement of Cheyne's medical doctrines took a practical turn during his stay in America and as part of his mission to the poor in 1746, when he established free dispensaries at The Foundery, Upper Moorfields and at Bristol, an early Methodist stronghold. Wesley acknowledged his debt in Primitive Physick; or an Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases (1747), which concludes with 'a few plain, easy Rules, chiefly transcribed from Dr *Cheyne'*.[37] Echoing Cheyne, Wesley's preface talks of the uncorrupted, immortal nature of the pre-lapsarian angelic bodies of men, and endorses Cheyne's account of medical history as a decline into unnecessarily complex theories. According to Wesley, Drs Sydenham, Dover, and latterly Cheyne were rare exceptions who, amidst great hostility from the profession, returned to basic remedies. Wesley's 'poor-man's' compendium was undoubtedly the most widely read medical book of the late eighteenth century and it served to democratise the preventive doctrines that Cheyne had previously advocated

---

34 The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley, (1846), I, p. 248 (hereafter 'Journal'). Middleton respected Wesley who, in July 1744, recorded passing 'two hours in Christian conference and prayer with Dr M., and the church in his house' (Journal, II, p. 38). On other occasions he talks of being received very 'cordially' at Middleton's house. In February 1750, Charles sought Middleton's help when his pregnant wife was caught in a thunder-storm, but an entry of two days later is tragically brief: 'Sat., Feb. 3rd. She miscarried' (Ibid., II, p. 67). Three years later, when Sarah Wesley was seriously ill with small-pox, her husband noted that, 'Dr. Middleton has been a father to her' (Ibid., II, p. 100).

35 On the Death of Dr Middleton, Dec. 16th, 1760 (Journal, II, p. 36-64), by Charles Wesley? A long poem published in the Arminian Magazine of 1783 (pp. 445; 502; 507), also treats of Middleton's death-bed Methodist conversion.

36 According to Jonathan Barry in *Piety and the Patient: Medicine and Religion in Eighteenth-Century Bristol,* in Patients and Practitioners, ed. by R. Porter (1985), Robertson later became a Hutchinsonian. Dr Barry's research centres upon the diaries of William Dyer (from 1730-1801), who knew Middleton, Robertson, and probably met Cheyne, whose death he records. I am indebted to Dr Barry's interesting work for some of the sources for Middleton's circle.

37 Primitive Physick, pp. 29-30.

amongst his educated middle and upper-class clientele.[38] As we have seen, Graves frequently connects dietary faddism with Methodist enthusiasm and this association is supported in fact. A fascinating 'List of some Names and the Places of Abode of persons in whose Minds the Light of God had Arisen, or is Graciously Rising', compiled by the pietist Ralph Mather in 1775, contains numerous entries like the following:

> Carrickfergus- E. Pendril, shoemaker, a married man, who under great persecution lives in continence, and abstinence from animal food...
> Belfast- William Forde, Hercules Lane a poor man, he is not as solid as E.P. but teachable, and lives on roots and water...
> Bolton- W. Winkbridge, fifteen years in purification...[39]

John Wesley also took a keen intellectual interest in Cheyne's early attempt to counter rationalist scepticism with a theology of 'naked faith and pure love'.[40] We do not have his reaction to the mystical 'Discourses' of 1740, but we do know that at Oxford in 1726, he read the revised 'Behmenist' version of the Philosophical Principles.[41] Wesley's biographers are probably correct in assuming that it was Cheyne whom Wesley visited on foot from Bristol during the hard frost of December 1741: 'I walked over to Bath, and had a conversation of several hours with one who had lived above seventy, and studied divinity above thirty years; yet remission of sins was quite a new doctrine to him. But I trust God will write it on his heart'.[42] His failure to name Cheyne suggests Wesley's disappointment at not making an immediate convert out of the pious old doctor (we shall return to the question of Cheyne's 'conversion' shortly). In the early 1730s, Cheyne began to find other patients who equated his medico-religious doctrines with conversion to the 'New Faith'.

In 1753, when a feverish Sarah Wesley was receiving Dr Middleton's fatherly attentions, she was also visited by Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon (1707-1791), one of Methodism's first aristocratic patrons.[43] Significantly, it was

---

38 At the time of Wesley's death in 1791 it had reached its 23rd edition. In America, where Methodism rapidly took root, many editions had appeared by the same date and it remained popular on both sides of the Atlantic well into the next century.

39 Walton, Notes and Materials, p. 595.

40 Richard Brantley, Locke, Wesley and the Method of English Romanticism (1984); for Wesley's debt to pietism in resisting Locke's empirical epistemology see esp. Chapter 1 passim, footnote 1; and pp. 237-8. Brantley notes in passing the significance of Wesley's exposure to Cheyne's Philosophical Principles. Brantley's general thesis further suggests the influence of an older pietism upon romanticism.

41 Green, p. 306: Wesley read the third edition of 1726 (identical to that of 1715).

42 Journal, II, p. 517.

43 In 1728, Selina Shirley, daughter of the IInd Earl Ferrars, married Theophilus Hastings, 9th Earl of Huntingdon. The Countess developed a reputation as a 'Lady Bountiful'. Her youthful piety was fostered by her sisters-in-law, Ladies Betty and Margaret Hastings, who converted after hearing the

during a serious bout of illhealth that Selina converted to the New Faith. Lord Bateman introduced her to Cheyne, who probably correctly attributed her numerous 'nervous' complaints to being constantly weakened by repeated child-bearing.[44] During the 1730s she was an adherent to Cheyne's regimen and he sent her many re-assurances that 'in spite of sneer, puzzle, fright and terror', she must persevere in the regimen:[45]

> Do you know many ladies of your rank, quality, youth, and necessary high living, that has sense, virtue, or indeed faculties capable of a conviction, resolution, and courage to enter upon such a course of self-denial for the poor disregarded low things (such as they are commonly reckoned), of good spirits, cheerfulness, health, and long-life! And pray what is all the grandeaur and glory of the world without them (Hastings, p. 10).

Although he feared that she would abandon his *Regimen*, on the whole his genial irony worked. Bateman, a model patient, reported that he had found her 'gay spirituous and lively on milk and vegetables', but Cheyne wrote to her that he 'was afraid that was the effect of your fine breeding, goodness, and hospitality, who would show the best countenance to your friends' (p. 30-31). Nervous illness may have been fashionable, but there was certainly some pressure upon a young countess to appear well in public. In 1733, she adopted a rigourous 'Milk and Seed' diet. Cheyne remarked that 'it is particular and inconvenient in the world, and all man and womankind will be up in arms against me, and your ladyship will be often told you are killing yourself by Dr Cheyne's whims'...'if I could cure my patients with burgundy and ham pie, I would be cried up to the skies' (p. 28; 41). As he predicted, when she suffered an attack of 'Hysteric Colic' in 1734, the London physicians blamed Cheyne's methods.

Throughout 1733 and early 1734, Cheyne urged Lady Huntingdon (suffering from certain post-natal complications which she was too bashful to describe in her letters), to visit Bristol, via Bath, in order to benefit from water-treatment and personal consultations with both himself and Dr Middleton. Cheyne was sensitive to her distaste for the glare of fashionable Bath (for him, a necessary evil), and suggested 'Bristol is a place of little company but enough to divert and entertain.

---

preaching of the Moravian Minister, Benjamin Ingham (1712-72), an original member of the Oxford Holy Club. See Anon, The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, 2 volumes, (1839, 1840); Cheyne's letter to the Countess (1732-1739), in the Huntingdon Library, were published by C.F. Mullett as The Letters of Dr George Cheyne to the Countess of Huntingdon (San Marino, 1940). (cited as, 'Letters (Hastings)').

44 No account puts a firm date to her conversion, but by the late 1730s, she had become intimate with the Wesleys and she was an original member the first official Methodist Society at Fetter Lane in 1739. She appointed Whitfield her household chaplain in 1748, and used her aristocratic privilege, to support a distinctly Calvinist branch of the Methodist movement (the 'Huntingdon Connection').

45 Mullett, Letters (Hastings), p. 48.

Lodgings and provisions are cheap' (pp. 33-4). In 1735, Lady Huntingdon was delivered of what Cheyne welcomed as a 'fine vegetable child'. After a lapse, in February 1737, Cheyne was congratulating her on returning to 'the dietick Gospel' and reprovingly cites the example of Lord Bateman, who does not 'apostize nor hunt new medicines' (p. 58). Cheyne's pietist vocabulary has many parallels with the religious injunctions of Methodism. This is particularly evident in his advice that the Countess should use her intuition as a guide: 'For Nature and your feelings will point it out. Providence and its sovereign has got you in his power, and you must only attend to him, and he will bring you by your feelings to the condition he wants you to be in; the cross is his school and it will teach you true wisdom' (p. 50). Cheyne might easily be talking about the New Faith, rather than merely faith in his 'dietick Gospel'. It illustrates the affective basis of Cheyne's mature medico-religious philosophy, and the validity his doctrine of sensibility gave to feelings, moreover a woman's feelings, as a test of truth; a test equal, if not superior to pure reason.

Cheyne does not discuss doctrinal issues in his extant letters to Lady Huntingdon, but she reveals her deep respect for her physician's piety in writing to her husband from Bath in December 1741, when she reports that after dining with Cheyne and his wife, she had spent the rest of the evening, 'in the most pious and religious conversation, a thing hard to be found here.[46] A few days later she wrote, 'to-day Dr Cheyne has been sitting with me and has been talking like an old apostle. He really has the most refined notions of the true spiritual religion I almost ever met with. The people of Bath says I have made him a Methodist, but indeed I receive much light and comfort from his conversation'.[47] Inevitably, critics equated Lady Huntingdon's medical faddism with her religious unorthodoxies. Richard Graves caricatures an aristocratic convert, Lady Sherwood, in The Spiritual Quixote: 'she listened with the same attention to the enthusiastic doctrines of these itinerant Preachers, as a person labouring under an hypochondriacal distemper does to the extravagant pretensions of a Mountebank' (p. 174). This is almost certainly a satiric portrait of Lady Huntingdon, or perhaps Cheyne's other patient, Lady Cox, who was also a convert. The real life 'Lady Sherwoods' entrusted both their bodies and their spirits to their 'Old Apostle', Cheyne. He, incidentally, was amply rewarded with cash and personal gifts.[48]

---

46 Report of the Manuscripts of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings Esq., (1934), pp. 32-3 (hereafter 'HMC Hastings').

47 Ibid., p. 33.

48 By September 1735, Cheyne could confidently beg Lady Huntingdon for a little 'surplus venison'. He was pleasantly surprised to receive a whole buck 'to entertain my brethren of the profession, who at this vacation run to feasting one another' (though the haunches proved good, the belly was rotten). It is

In the light of this accumulation of evidence for Cheyne's contact with the founders of Methodism, we might ask whether the people of Bath were correct in assuming that Cheyne became a convert? Charles Mullett, asking himself the same question in 1940, points to what seems like a slighting remark in a letter of Cheyne's to Richardson in which he asks if the novelist has read William Law's Appeal to All that Doubt the Gospel (1740), adding that 'the Methodists should get it by heart'.[49] Cheyne's mature opinion regarding Methodism has in fact survived, buried in John Keble's dense Life of the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas Wilson, D. D., Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man (Oxford, 1863).[50] Cheyne's comment is best presented within the context of a brief account of his relations with the Wilson family.

Keble's biography reveals that Cheyne was a friend of both the Bishop (1663-1755), and his son of the same name, (rector of St Stephen's Walbroke from 1737, until his death in 1784). Cheyne was one of the 'several physicians' who were consulted by the younger Wilson over the writing of his influential temperance tract Distilled Spiritous Liquors, the Bane of the Nation (1736). Bishop Wilson's entry of Cheyne's name in the Mortuary List describes 'a most excellent religious physician and philosopher: for whose excellent works I and many more stand indebted'.[51] Cheyne had written to the Bishop's son on 9 March, 1740 that he was glad to hear, with the announcement of his father's book, 'The Indian Instructed', that 'the good worthy Bishop of Man, continues an honour to human nature, and a faithful dispenser of the words of the holy Jesus'.[52] 'Some months later', Cheyne warmly acknowledged the receipt of the work in question: 'I esteem it much, for its justness, solidity, and propriety for the end proposed... I gave a copy to good Mr Jones, who is the source and great promoter of the Welch schools'.[53] Wilson's popular tract, An Essay Towards an Instruction for the Indians (1740), (seventeen editions by 1802), dedicated to the Trustees of the Colony of Georgia, was motivated, as its preface reveals, by a

---

interesting that he did not avoid such social obligations. In 1734, he writes that 'the fine cane shall be an everlasting remembrance in my family' (Mullett, Letters (Hastings), p. 44; 48-50).

49 Ibid., p. 88.

50 2 parts in 1, being Volume 1 of The Works of Thomas Wilson, 7 volumes (1847-63), hereafter 'Keble'.

51 Ibid., I, p. 923.

52 Keble's account relied upon 'an ample and curious store of letters to and from Dr Wilson, his son', including several letters of Cheyne's from which he prints a brief extracts. I traced this collection of manuscripts, to the collection of Keble College Library, Oxford, but the present librarian informs me that, although listed in the inventory, the relevant bundles 'disappeared' in the 1960s!

53 Keble, I, pp. 923-4. Griffith Jones (1683-1761), a Welsh Anglican divine involved in the S.G.F.P. and other practical evangelical activities. He established a number of charity schools throughout Wales from 1730 onwards and increasingly identified with non-conformity and the Methodist movement. A Welsh translation of Wilson's book appeared at Llundain in 1774 (DNB, X, pp. 991-2).

millennialist concern with the conversion of the Indians (considered remnants of the Tribe of Israel).[54] Cheyne took a practical interest in these missionary endeavours, but had little joy when he tried to distribute the tract amongst the Bristol dealers to the West Indies: 'alas! they are most of them pirates and Madagascar men'.[55] Similar efforts amongst the Jamaica traders were equally fruitless, the Spanish War having thrown the West Indian merchant fleet into a state of perpetual alarm. In the face of these hindrances to his zealous attempts to speed on the millenium, Cheyne reflected resignedly upon the progress of the 'Divine Restoration':

> We do our best, and wait God's time, and seize only the moments of eternity...I hope, though the nation, especially those of the two extremes, the highest and the greatest, and the lowest and most abject, be extremely ignorant, corrupted, and vicious, yet there is the dawning of some good spirit abroad among the middling rank; and that even the Methodists, though novices, indiscreet and precipitate, may be sent to move the waters, to bring some to hearken to the gentle, still voice, which in time may lead them into solid truth, if the evil spirit do not creep in, as it has ever done in all these specious pretensions and divisions. But the times and seasons are in the hands of the Father. 'What is that to thee? Follow thou Me?.'. Depend on it, whatever be your or my outward state of existence, you shall, and all your relatives, possess the heart and all the most tender and amiable affections and actions of mine...(Keble, I, p. 924-5).

As Cheyne's most overt extant comment on the contemporary state of Britain this also shows his cynical view of the aristocracy, tainted by luxury and vice, and equal despair at the depravity of what he thought were the insensitive labouring classes. It was in the rising 'middling-classes' that he saw hope of spiritual restoration. As we shall be seeing shortly, for Cheyne it was men like his pious printer, Samuel Richardson, who epitomised the principles of frugality, restraint and cultivated sensibility, in whom there lay hope of moral recovery. Though sympathetic, Cheyne clearly had misgivings about the 'enthusiastic' aspects of Methodism and had no faith in the more democratic direction of the evangelical revival.

Cheyne's early years in Scotland had shown him that sectarian dissent often discredited Christianity, creating damaging, sometimes violent social divisions. He had observed several of his close friends abandon the restrained millenarian hopes of the Philadelphians for the insane rantings of the French Prophets. When Methodist converts made similar claims to miracles and prophecy, critics were quick to make comparisons with the Philadelphians and Camisards. John Wesley disapproved of the

---

54 General James Oglethorpe, met Bishop Wilson in 1735 and suggested the need for such a work in the colony where he had taken Whitefield, and both John and Charles Wesley (his personal secretary), to act as spiritual leaders. Wilson's book was a response to his interest in the activities of Oglethorpe and The Society for Promoting the Gospels in Foreign Parts. Bishop Wilson also become interested in the Moravians after a meeting with Count Zizendorf in 1737.

55 Keble, I, p. 923 (Cheyne to Wilson, 13 August, 1740).

more extravagant aspects of these activities, but in Bristol he found converts amongst a small group of second-generation French Prophets. Cheyne (or Middleton), was probably the physician who first informed Wesley of Cunningham and the activities of the Camisard converts.[56] Cheyne could not fail to be suspicious and his description of the Methodists as 'novices' has particular significance in the context of his quietist mystical studies. The writers admired by this older pietist movement, like Bourignon and Madame Guyon, laid down strict rules regarding noviateship into the spiritual life, which only gradually led towards illuminated states of recollection. Cheyne, who years earlier had warned a well-meaning young Andrew Ramsay about 'spiritual pride', measured the outward zeal of the Methodists against these quietist doctrines. The Richardson correspondence confirms that Cheyne distanced himself from the Methodists, siding with the scholarly pietist, William Law, who by the late 1730s was presenting a more introverted, Behmenist account of the working of divine grace in nature.[57] Quietist theosophy was too coldly philosophical for the Wesleys who believed that restoration to a state of grace should be a dynamically transforming experience, reflected in an outward dramatic show of emotions.[58] Everything in Cheyne's writings suggests that for him, such sudden behavioural changes were simply the symptoms of bodily dysfunction.

This distinction between an older generation of pietists and the proclaimers of the New Faith parallels the earlier reaction of quietists to the Camisards and provides the context in which we should read Cheyne's notable statements advocating 'common-sense' and social conformity in the Preface to An Essay on Regimen (1740). It helps to resolve the perhaps ambiguous relationship between his apparent private unorthodoxy and outward conformity, and enables us to understand how he was able to distinguish between a positive concept of nervous sensibility, and the symptoms of enthusiasm which freethinking critics could too easily equate with madness. Cheyne and Law were only the most prominent scholars in a hitherto obscure, but influential network of pietist (and significantly Behmenist) scholars who formed the inner-circle of Cheyne's 'disciples' during the 1720s and 30s.

---

56 Schwartz, Prophets, 'The Evangelical Revival' p. 202 f; p. 288 f.

57 The Methodist position is clear from Charles Wesley's response to Law's Restoration (1739), where he concludes that 'his knowledge of the new birth is mostly theory' (Journal, I, p. 191).

58 John Wesley's mature attitude to Cheyne's metaphysics may be inferred from his detailed reply to Cheyne's disciple and translator Dr John Robertson in response to a present of an annotated copy of Ramsay's Philosophical Principles in 1753 (Letters, I, pp. 107-9). This response explains the temperamental and doctrinal differences between Cheyne's philosophical pietist circle and the Methodists. Wesley also criticises their mysticism in a long formal letter to Law (Letters, III, pp. 332-370).

**A Mystic Circle**

Cheyne, with his metaphysical, scientific and practical concerns, and William Law, with his theological and devotional interests, encouraged the study of mystical writers amongst younger disciples, who formed a significant social circle with common religious, moral and political sympathies. They engaged in a number of related literary projects which continued into the 1750s and beyond. Recently, Rosemary Bechler has drawn attention to Richardson's participation in this group and discussed Clarissa (1747-8), as a product of this pietist movement.[59] Richardson began work on the novel in 1744, within a year of Cheyne's death. The intimate group of friends to whom the novelist gave access to his early drafts was composed almost exclusively of former friends of his physician who had also become admirers of Law's Behmenist theology. Bechler shows that the underlying religious structure of the novel, enacted in the naturalistic surface drama of Lovelace and Clarissa, embodies the Behmenist 'dialectic' of light and dark principles central to Law's theosophy.

Bechler notes the public 'reticence' of Law's circle, which she attributes to a cautious attitude to declaring shared religious unorthodoxies and disaffection with the Hanoverian establishment. The non-juring and (in the cases of Ramsay, Pitsligo, Law, and William Cheyne at least), Jacobite leanings of several of Cheyne's associates has already been discussed. As Bechler notes, just after Cheyne's death, Law 'mentioned Dr Cheyne' to John Byrom (of whom more below), 'and his not writing to him upon some matters because his letters would fall into the hands of his executors'.[60] Some indications support Bechler's picture of a masonic-style sect committed to 'an arcane cosmology' and an older monarchical order, but she uses mistaken evidence when she suggests that they self-consciously saw themselves as a semi-formal sect or brotherhood, addressing each other as 'the Brethren'.[61] As Bechler herself remarks 'more research needs to be done into the extraordinary circle with whom Richardson was intimate during the years in which he penned Clarissa —a circle that notably

---

59 *"Triall by what is contrary": Samuel Richardson and Christian Dialectic*, Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence ed. by V. G. Myer (1986), passim.

60 Talon, p. 221.

61 Bechler, p. 98. Ramsay's Masonic connections and Byrom's playful quasi-masonic portrayal of himself as the 'Grand Master' of his system of shorthand encourage such a view. But her evidence for a formal connection relies upon a misreading of a remark Cheyne made in a letter to Richardson which in fact refers to congeries of booksellers. My reading is not only suggested by the immediate context, but confirmed by other instances throughout the correspondence with Richardson, where Cheyne talks of the booksellers as 'the Brethren' out of his fear that they were formed into a cabal to rob him of the profits from his books. (Bechler, p. 94, quoting Mullett Letters, p. 112; 118). In fact I suspect Cheyne may have been making an irate reference to Leake's known membership of the Bath Masonic Lodge.

included his physician Dr George Cheyne' (p. 94). There follows a group portrait of this circle, whilst Cheyne's relationship with Richardson is the subject of Chapter 10.

Law's development of a mystical theology was encouraged by direct contact with the pietist network with which Cheyne had long associated. As Law's biographer, J. H. Overton remarks, 'Dr Cheyne incidentally influenced Law more than any living man, having been, as Law himself told Byrom *the providential occasion of his meeting or knowing of Jacob Boehme, by a book which the Doctor mentioned to him in a letter, Which book mentioned Behmen'*.[62] What proved to be a profoundly transforming experience is thought to have taken place between 1733 and 1737. Overton's use of the word 'incidentally' to imply a chance encounter, is undermined by his later observation that Cheyne was 'himself a mystic of a very marked type'.[63] Surely Cheyne's recommendation was made in direct response to enquiries from Law regarding the sources for the theosophical colouring in the Philosophical Principles (1715), and this is confirmed when Francis Okely, a Moravian 'disciple' of Law, notes that the book Cheyne recommended was in fact Metternicht's Fides et Ratio Collatae.[64] The important friendship between Cheyne and Law is best examined within the context of a brief account of the latter's early career.

William Law, (1686-1761), born at King's Cliffe, Northamptonshire, left a fellowship at Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 1714, as a Nonjuror.[65] In 1717 he published Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor (i.e. Hoadley), a High-Church contribution to the Bangorian controversy. In 1723, Law found employment with Edward Gibbon, grandfather of the historian, as household chaplain at the family home in Putney, and as private tutor to Gibbon's son at Cambridge. Gibbon shared some of Law's privately held life-long Stuart sympathies. During this period Law published a refutation of Mandeville entitled Remarks Upon the Fable of the Bees (1723), and the very puritanical tract The Unlawfullness of Stage Entertainment (1726), both of which no doubt earned the approval of Cheyne. In the same year he published a work of practical devotion, A Treatise Upon Christian Perfection and this was followed by A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life (1728), perhaps the most

---

62 Talon, p. 221, as quoted in Overton, p. 92.

63 Overton's only attempt at a definition of this 'type' is a reference to mathematics but he does note that a mystic tendency 'is traceable in almost all his [Cheyne's] works' (p. 95).

64 Francis Okely, Memoirs of Behmen (1780), p. 105n. Discussed in Hobhouse, *Fides et Ratio* passim.

65 For Law's biography the primary source is William Walton's valuable, but confusingly arranged Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of the celebrated Divine and Philosopher, William Law (1854). Also used; J. H. Overton, The Life and Opinions of William Law (1881); Stephen Hobhouse Selected Mystical writings of William Law (1938) (biographical appendices); A. K. Walker, Decline of Hell (1973) (incorporating revisions to Overton and Walton by Hobhouse); and E. R. Rudolph William Law (1980).

popular devotional work of the century. This first phase of Law's career ends with the publication of an attack upon deism, The Case of Reason or Natural Religion (1731).

Despite their lasting friendship, the first extant allusion to Law amongst Cheyne's papers dates from as late as 30 October 1737, when, in a letter to Lady Murray he remarked; 'pray you have seen Law's Book against Hoadly, Get Mr Baillie to read it, it is admirable I think' (Mellerstain). The reference is to Law's Demonstration of the Gross and Fundamental Errors of a Late Book Called 'A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (1737), the summation of an attack upon Hoadley's latitudinarianism. This brief recommendation is the only explicit statement we have supporting the strong circumstantial evidence that Cheyne shared Law's High-Church principles. Prompted by Cheyne, Law began to study Boehme around 1735. Probably with Cheyne's assistance, he obtained the manuscripts of two Behmenist scholars, the Philadelphian, Dr Francis Lee and the emigré German, Dionysius Andreas Freher.[66] As noted earlier, Freher's Bow Lane Behmenist group included the illustrator-copyist J. D. Leuchter, whose 'Paradox Emblemata' and other illustrations were reproduced in magnificent etchings for the 'Law Edition' of Boehme's works (1764-81), where, in turn, they inspired Blake, Coleridge and a whole generation of mystically inclined Romantics.[67]

The Behmenist influence first appears in Law's essay The Grounds and Reasons for Christian Regeneration, or the New Birth Offered to the Consideration of Christians and Deists (1739), a critical address to the Methodists with whom Law had originally been closely associated. In 1733, The Weekly Miscellany advertised an anonymous Letter to the Methodists (1733), a piece printed by Richardson, which was generally believed to have been written by Law.[68] The predominantly High-Church Miscellany was owned by William Webster, and printed and partly edited by Richardson, who sent Cheyne regular copies as token payment for medical advice. Cheyne contributed anonymously to the paper, which frequently carried

---

66 C. Muses, Illumination (1951), passim. The 1764-81 edition of Boehme was compiled by Law's disciples, Thomas Ward and Thomas Langcake, with the financial assistance of Mrs Hutcheson, the widow of Cheyne's patron Francis Hutcheson. At least one book, 'The Supersensual Life', is a translation made by Lee. For Blake's enthusiasm see Hirst, pp. 95-6. Coleridge's heavily annotated copy of this edition (a gift from De Quincey), is in the BL; his extensive marginalia reproduced in The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, (1979-83), 12, pp. 553-696). Also consulted, J. B. Beer, Coleridge the Visionary, (1959), pp. 60-63. Boehme was also studied by Wordsworth and Shelley, see Abrams Natural Supernaturalism, pp. 141-198.

67 Cheyne's close friend, Dr John Heylyn (see below), is mentioned alongside William Law as a recipient of a small legacy in the will of the Bread St drysalter, Allen Leppington (d. 1743), one of Freher's leading associates. Hirst, pp. 182-3; C. Muses, Illuminations on Jacob Boehme: The Work of Dionysius Freher (N.Y. 1951), Ch., 1.

68 The Letter defends Oxford Methodists against an attack in Fog's Weekly Journal (Dec., 1733).

advertisements for his books, and he would have been familiar with the debate prompted by the Letter.[69] The attribution of A Letter to the Methodists is now in doubt, but it certainly reflects what was at the time Law's sympathetic relations with John Wesley.[70] Until his departure for America in 1735, Wesley was under Law's spiritual guidance, but upon his return, Wesley rapidly became estranged from Law's mysticism. Cheyne, well-informed of the rift through his intimacy with both parties, sided with Law's scholarly, intellectual quietism. [71]

Although Law's studies in Boehme were to deeply influence all his subsequent theological writings and brand him an 'Enthusiast', he was critical of the heresies and extravagant behaviour tolerated by the earlier Behmenists. Cheyne recommended Law's writings to patients who were offended by the socially disruptive behaviour of the Methodists, amongst them Samuel Richardson, who in his capacity as printer gave practical help to Law and his adherents.[72] In April 1742, a conscientious Richardson had so pestered Cheyne as to how he could repay him for his medical advice, that to ease his 'hyppish, honest Heart', Cheyne asked him to arrange for a bookseller to 'gather all Mr Law's Pieces, all he ever wrote or published or is reckoned his':

> Get them handsomely bound and send them to me, I will keep them in my Family and Library, as an eternal remembrance of you and him, whom I know to be the greatest best Man, and the most solid and deep of this Island. I have most of his larger Pieces already sent by himself, his Appeal and Generation lately, which are transcendent, but these I intend to give away.[73]

The Appeal, along with the earlier Grounds and Reasons for Christian Regeneration (1739), both reflect Law's studies in Boehme and have been described by one recent commentator as together presenting 'the heart of Law's later theology'.[74]

Regretably, only one letter survives of Cheyne and Law's correspondence but there is every reason to suppose that they discussed in depth the theological ideas they both put into print in the late 1730s. Cheyne did not live to see Law develop his theosophy in The Spirit of Prayer (1749), The Way to Divine Knowlege (1752) (the spelling of 'Knowlege' reflects the preference of Richardson), and The Spirit of Love

---

69 Sale, Master Printer, pp. 68-70; Mullett, Letters, p. 31. Some essays in the Miscellany strongly suggest themselves as Cheyne's work but cannot be definitely attributed. A regular contributor (under the pseudonym 'Timothy Hooker'), was the Behmenist John Hildrop (d. 1756), whose Reflections on Reason (1729), (p. 123 and passim), contains unacknowledged borrowings from Cheyne's Principles (1715).

70 Keith-Walker, Ch. 13, and J. B. John Wesley and William Law (1945).

71 Mullett, Letters, LVI, p. 88.

72 Sale, Master Printer, pp. 126-7.

73 26, April, 1742, LX, p. 93. Cheyne later acknowledged Richardson's 'most valuable Present of Mr Law's Works' (LXIII, p. 98).

74 Rudolph, p. 69.

(1752). Cheyne read Law's Christian Regeneration (1739), in time for it to influence his own mature *Philosophical Discourses* in his Essay on Regimen (1740).[75] With the hostility to 'Enthusiasts', Law's courage in publishing and defending his notions of 'Christian Regeneration', gave Cheyne added moral strength to risk further criticism by attempting to produce a philosophical and metaphysical marriage between Newtonianism and theosophy in what he called his *Magnum Opus:* An Essay on Regimen (1740), and its companion volume The Natural Method (1742).

Law's extant letter to Cheyne is largely taken up in answering a specific enquiry from the physician regarding Law's public claim that Newton had derived his theory of attraction from an intense study of Boehme; a claim made in the second of two defensive tracts addressed to Joseph Trapp, the staunchly Anglican Professor of Poetry at Oxford, who had attacked Law as a dangerous enthusiast.[76] Law's letter (Appendix V), provides an obviously curious Cheyne with corroboration. Whatever the truth behind Law's still controversial claim, Cheyne and Law shared a desire to use Behmenist concepts to resist or augment any purely mechanistic account of nature. In 1740, in his *Magnum Opus,* the final fulfilment of his youthful plea for a *Principia Medicinae,* Cheyne's argues that 'we now know much of the general laws of motion, mechanism, reflection and refraction both in natural philosophy, civil society, and human policy' but these laws need to be applied to 'all the *Systems Moral, Spiritual and Divine,* tho these last have been but little studied, and timorously applied to, by Persons of a proper Spirit and genius, out of Dread of the odious Designation of Enthusiasm or Superstition: but future Ages may perhaps get over this *Terror*' (ER, p.333). Cheyne shared Law's belief that 'spiritual analogy' and enlightened intuition could penetrate into 'the solid Foundation in the nature of things': what Boehme, and consequently, Law frequently termed 'the Deep Ground of Eternal Nature'.

There is no adequate history of the eighteenth-century British Behmenist tradition.[77] Whatever the formal or informal status of Behmenists after the disbanding of the Philadelphians in 1704, through Cheyne at least, Law had access to a thriving tradition of Behmenist scholarship. By 1730 several of Cheyne's original 'spiritual

---

75 Although most of the *Discourses* had been written by 1737, those on 'Spiritual Nature' were added to the scheme of the book in 1739 at an early proof-stage (see following chapter).

76 Trapp, Discourse of the Folly, Sin and Danger of Being Righteous Overmuch (1739). Trapp's main target was Methodism. Law responded with An Answer to Dr Trapp's Discourse (1739), and Some Animadversions on Dr Trapp's Reply (1739).

77 Désirée Hirst's valuable Hidden Riches (1964), contains one brief allusion to Cheyne's role: 'particularly vital contacts for Law were Dr George Cheyne, who is said to have introduced Law to Boehme's works...and a member of Parliament, Archibald Hutcheson (p. 192). (Hutcheson to be discussed shortly).

friends' had died, most notably the Garden brothers and Dr James Keith. However several younger adherents survived alongside Cheyne,—Lord Deskford, John Heylyn, Alexander, James and William Forbes, Chevalier Ramsay, and Nathaniel Hooke—several of whom became associates of Law.

Alexander Forbes (Lord Pitsligo), remained Cheyne's friend long after he had introduced the physician to Metternicht's Behmenist critique of Locke in 1708. Pitsligo spent the years between the Jacobite Rebellions in exile at pietist centres on the Continent or in quietist retirement in Scotland. He briefly mentions Cheyne in his Moral Essays (1733).[78] Pitsligo's unpublished manuscripts reveal his deep interest in the mystics and a bundle of his 'reading notes' contain a substantial untitled essay which summarises Cheyne's theory of spiritual reunion. Though not in Cheyne's hand, this may be a copy of an original draft for a *Philosophical Discourse,* for Pitsligo's manuscripts contain other evidence that he read Cheyne's *Magnum Opus* in manuscript.[79] Cheyne also knew Pitsligo's kinsmen, William, 14th Lord Forbes and James, 16th Lord Forbes. The former in particular was also an adherent of Continental mysticism. He was one of several Scottish followers who lived as guests of Madame Guyon at her home in Blois between 1710 and 1717. His younger brother James shared his religious interests and was present when Guyon died at Blois in 1717.[80] Cheyne treated the Forbes family on their rare visits to England and discussed mystical theology with both William and James Forbes after 1715.[81] Such scraps of

---

78 Pitsligo also mentions Cheyne's Philosophical Principles in his unpublished, *Familiar Letters and Extracts by way of Supplement to the Dissertation on Providence* (Letter XV) ( NLS 4796, Box 102, folder 14).

79 NLS 4796, Box 103, folder 23. This MS essay on 'Attraction' may be a précis made by Pitsligo for a pietist friend. Also present is a handwritten 'Contents List' of the chapter headings for Cheyne's last two books, his *Magnum Opus* (though their ordering does not conform with that eventually adopted in print). This is probably the contents-list of a manuscript, seen by Pitsligo before Cheyne decided to divide the material into two volumes. See following chapter for this pre-publication history.

80 James married a sister of Pitsligo and after involvement in the 1715 Rebellion he escaped to the Continent in the company of Dr George Garden where they both enroled as medical students at Leyden. Pardoned he returned to Castle Forbes, and created a substantial library of mystical theology which survived until the 1970s (Henderson Mystics, pp. 46-8).

81 The House of Forbes ed. by A. & H. Taylor (IInd Spalding Club, 1937), pp. 243-4, prints two letters from Cheyne (SRO, GD 52/ 1435/i,ii). One is presented as addressed to James Forbes, but internal evidence suggests that the addressee was Pitsligo. In a postscript, Cheyne sends 'my Service to the Chevalier & Mr Hooke when you see them'; valuable evidence of Cheyne's continued friendship with the long exiled Ramsay. The undated letter, certainly from Cheyne to William Forbes belongs to the same period (1726-1730). The Doctor flatters himself that his long experience in nervous illnesses enables him to offer valuable advice on how Forbes may best 'preserve the Clearness and use of your faculties and the Tranquillity of your Spirits longer', before he returns abroad. There follows a very abstruse passage in which Cheyne, rarely explicit concerning his more unorthodox religious interests, launches into a cryptic discussion of Bertot's mystical theology.

evidence further confirm Cheyne's continued place within the pietist network linking Scotland, England and the Continent.

Cheyne and William Law had other notable 'disciples' with whom Richardson also became acquainted. We are indebted to John Byrom (1691-1761), 'the tallest man in England', for the preservation of some important facts regarding Cheyne's mystical activities.[82] Manchester born, Byrom graduated M.A. from Trinity, Cambridge, in 1715, where he began to publish verse. Like Law, he held High-Church opinions and privately favoured the Stuarts. He abandoned a Fellowship in 1715 and left for the Continent where it was rumoured he met the Pretender. He studied medicine at Montpellier but there is no evidence that he ever properly qualified as a physician even though he was often known as 'Doctor Byrom' after his return to England in 1718. Thereafter, he made a peripatetic living giving private lessons in a very popular system of stenography of his own devising. His pupils included David Hartley, the Wesleys, and many members of the peerage who became associates in an informal quasi-Masonic 'Society' at the centre of which stood Byrom, the self-styled 'Grand Master'.

Stenography gave Byrom the independence to pursue his eclectic interests in verse-writing, linguistics, natural philosophy, arcane antiquarianism and the Christian mystics. In 1724, he became a fellow of the Royal Society where he befriended Newton, Folkes, Desgu liers, and Hartley. An early admiration for Malbranche brought Byrom into the field of theology shared by Cheyne's works, where metaphysics and mysticism met. After being deeply moved by Law's Serious Call in 1729 he sought out its author. Together they studied such works as St John of the Cross, Tauler, Suso, Rysbroech, Guyon, Bertot, and especially Boehme, though they did not always agree on the value of particular mystics: Law deeply mistrusted Bourignon, whom Byrom championed.

Byrom and Cheyne shared many interests, but only became personally acquainted at the very close of the latter's life.[83] In December 1741, Cheyne wrote diffidently to Byrom, after their mutual friends, Lady Huntingdon and David Hartley, had mentioned Byrom's medical training and that he 'had long been conversant in spiritual

---

82 Recorded in Byrom's diaries etc., printed as The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byrom, 2 vols, (Chetham Society, 1854-7), (hereafter 'Remains'). Most citations are to Talon's more accessible Selections from the Journals and Papers of John Byrom (1950).

83 At Bath in October, 1733 Byrom noted meeting 'Sir Humphrey Briggs, a patient of Dr Cheyne's...who was given up at forty, and is now above sixty, very hearty considering' (Talon, p. 140.). By July of 1738, Byrom was discussing his brother-in-laws illness with Cheyne at Bath and he wrote his wife, that 'having had the advice of the famous Doctor, I am the less concerned, hoping that as he says that he is very easy about himself, I may dismiss my useless uneasiness and presume that he will do very well' (Remains, p. 202).

writings, the approved mystics in particular, and had lately got and read the wonderful German author of several treatises in French'.[84] He was referring to Baron Marsay, the Franco-German Behmenist, whose works had so impressed Cheyne that he was planning to pay for an English translation. Cheyne thought Marsay was 'experienced in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and the means of the universal restoration, as I hope and am made to believe you, Sir, may be' and he invited Byrom to collect a complimentary copy of 'my last labours in medicine' (i.e. An Essay on Regimen (1740) and The Natural Method (1742)), from Strahan 'which may have some remote tendency that way'.[85]

It was not until the following August (1742), that Cheyne replied to 'a slow letter' from Byrom.[86] Finding that he had been misinformed concerning Byrom's familiarity with Marsay, he now directed him to his sister-in-law, Mrs Middleton, or Dr Heylyn at London, from whom copies could be obtained (for Heylyn, see below).[87] We do not know if he ever gave Cheyne his opinion of Marsay, but it seems very probable that at Bath, where they had a mutual friend, Dr David Hartley, Byrom conversed with Cheyne on religious and scientific matters during what proved to be the last nine months of the physician's life.[88] On 12 April 1743, Byrom wrote to his son that 'I am much grieved at the news of Dr Cheyne's death at Bath, where I thought to have called from Oxford, if possible to have seen him and Dr Hartley; I have lost an acquaintance and friend in the Dr, and shorthand too'.[89]

David Hartley's mature philosophical endeavours require no introduction. In his youth he studied mathematics at Jesus College, Cambridge, but his non-juring principles had deflected him from a chosen career in the Church into medicine. He befriended Byrom in 1736 and settled permanently at Bath in 1742, where he was already acquainted with the elderly Cheyne in both a professional role concerning the General Hospital, and in the social-intellectual circle centred at Prior Park. Cheyne's influence upon Hartley's development of a 'moral' Newtonianism and associationist theories, is particularly evident in the Behmenist colouring to the theory of

---

84 Talon, pp. 207-8. Cheyne writes as a stranger.

85 In response, Byrom, eager to receive them, wrote to Strahan on 4 January, 1742 with instructions for the forwarding of the books to Manchester.

86 Talon, p. 211.

87 Ibid., p. 212. On 31 August, Byrom told his wife that he had walked the length of the Strand searching for Mrs Middleton's address, only eventually to find noone at home (Remains, p. 332).

88 Hartley personally delivered Cheyne's original letter of introduction to Byrom. On the back Hartley wrote in shorthand; 'the Dr gave me this yesterday to direct to you...what if you was to come to Bath, we should be heartily glad to see you if it suits your convenience. I pray God direct and bless us all, that we may know and speak and act the truth as it is in Jesus' (Remains, p. 332).

89 Talon, p. 215. The only evidence that Cheyne studied shorthand.

'theopathy', as developed in Part II of the Observations of Man (1749). Cheyne, Byrom and Hartley shared their mystical and scientific interests with Dr John Freke F.R.S. (1688-1756), chief surgeon at Bartholomew's Hospital. Freke's concern with mysticism also supported High-Church, Tory principles. In the 1730s, Freke acted as Richardson's surgeon, sending reports to Cheyne on the state of their mutual patient's blood. Freke later corresponded with Law and developed Behmenist inspired theories of the aether and electrical fire in An Essay to Show the Cause of Electricity (1748), revised as a Treatise on the Nature of Fire (1752).[90]

Another figure in this circle, John Heylyn (1685?-1759), is of particular interest because of his long-standing friendship with Cheyne and subsequent intimacy with Samuel Richardson.[91] He attended Trinity College, Cambridge, from where he graduated D.D. in 1728. He befriended Lords Deskford and Pitsligo, and possibly Ramsay, whilst travelling in Europe in about 1708, when he also came into contact with Continental pietist groups.[92] Dr Keith told Deskford in May 1723, that all the Scottish quietists were eagerly awaiting the completion of Heylyn's translation of the writings of the French mystic, Brother Lawrence (1610-1691).[93] Heylyn was at Bristol for his health under Dr Middleton's care, but Keith promised to get Pitsligo to 'hasten him' to finish what was published in 1724 as Devotional Tracts Concerning the Pres ence of God (1724).[94] In 1723, Heylyn became the first rector of the new church of St Mary le Strand, where he remained until his death in 1759.[95] His edition of Brother Lawrence brought him into contact with William Law, who later told Byrom that he had discovered the writings of Lawrence through Cheyne sending Heylyn's book to a mutual friend, a certain Mr Hogg (unidentified). An author's

---

90 Dr Simon Schaffer's forthcoming, *Electricity, the People, and the Wrath of God: the Martin-Freke Debate*, Isis (?). Thanks to the generosity of Dr Schaffer, I have had access to this essay before publication (as did Bechler). The mature Cheyne moves towards Freke's dualistic theory of active and passive fire, when he notes that 'Fire, like all violent Motion, divides first, and then (its) *attractive* Virtue clashes and combines..'., and that 'Fire is the grand Agent in the Body and dead Matter' (NM, pp. 20; 18). He also equates 'fire' with elemental 'sulphur' or 'light' and in An Essay on Regimen he suggests that the most rarefied form of this 'element' might be Newton's aether (p. 92). See Lester M. King, *George Cheyne: Mirror of 18th Century Medicine* (1972), p. 530-2.

91 DNB, IX, pp. 769-770 and British Biography (1773-80), as extracted in the British Biographical Archive.

92 Henderson, Mystics, p. 189 and NLS, Acc. 4796, 104, 26b. Walter Scott noted that Heylyn was a particular friend of Pitsligo in his Review to Pitsligo's Thoughts Concerning Man's Conditions and Duties etc. (Blackwoods, Edinburgh, 1854), p. xv., where Scott records the anecdote that Heylyn undertook to visit Pitsligo in Scotland but upon reaching Edinburgh and finding that Castle Forbes was another two-hundred miles, he turned back for London.

93 Henderson, Mystics, p. 189.

94 Heylyn's son lodged with the Middletons, at College Green in the 1720s (notes relating to John Heylyn's Library acquisition, Bristol Central Library.)

95 He was to publish a number of theological and devotional works, lectures and sermons (DNB).

presentation copy of this book, surviving in Law's library at Northcliffe, is confirmation of a friendship between Heylyn and Law which may pre-date 1724.[96] Heylyn also had contact with Dionysius Freher's Bow Lane Behmenist circle through at least one member, Allan Leppington, a Bread St drysalter.[97] The survival of Heylyn's library reveals the extent to which he immersed himself in mystical theology.[98] Here we find works by Scougall, George Garden, Metternicht, Poiret, Fénelon, Guyon, Norris and numerous editions of Boehme, resting beside Freke's Treatise on...Fire, Cheyne's medical texts and the novels of their mutual friend Richardson.[99] Although Heylyn earned the popular title 'Mystic Doctor', he remained a distinguished member of the London clergy, becoming a Prebendary of St Paul's and Westminster, a fact which suggests that there was a much greater degree of tolerance of mystical interests within the Anglican establishment than we are inclined to think.

By the 1730s, Heylyn was a close friend of the Cheyne and Middleton families; an intimacy confirmed when Cheyne appointed Heylyn as executor of his will on 23 March, 1738.[100] Cheyne directed Byrom to Heylyn because he was directly responsible for obtaining Marsay's books from an Amsterdam bookseller, Rutger Goyen, and also enquiring about Marsay's life-story on behalf of his British admirers.[101] We catch a glimpse of Heylyn's respect for Cheyne's scholarship in an affectionate letter he wrote to the physician's son-in-law, William Stuart in 1742, through whom he sends his compliments for the present of The Natural Method:

> I am reading it at my leisure hours and the part I have got through requires a good deal of attention yet I find it a great deal easier to my apprehension than the last before this was [i.e. Essay on Regimen] I am neither Philosopher nor Physician so must not set up for a judge in either of their provinces but as a philologist I say with great confidence that if we had such an academy to cultivate our language as they have in France such a society would find in that book more new expressions proper to enrich our tongues upon the subject there treated of than in

---

96 They were exact contemporaries at Cambridge. In Selected Mystical Writings of William Law (1938) (p. 288), Stephen Hobhouse demolishes an earlier claim by Walton (Notes and Materials pp. 26; 355), that Law was Heylyn's curate at St Mary's, but finds evidence that Law held that post at Haslingfield where Heylyn was vicar from 1714-19. Law's only extant sermon, (in which he upholds his non-juring principles), was preached there on 7 July, 1713.

97 C. Muses, Illuminations of...Boehme Ch. 1.

98 When Heylyn's only son committed suicide at Bristol in 1760, he left his father's library to the city. It now rests intact (but very dusty!), in the reserve collection of Bristol Central Library.

99 Heylyn's copies of all Cheyne's works from An Essay of Health onwards, were presented by the author but modern rebinding has destroyed any inscriptions.

100 Heylyn was the only executor who was not directly related to Cheyne (PRO, Prob. Class II, 727, 1743).

101 Heylyn to Goyen, draft letter (in French), uncatalogued green notebook, BCL and Preface to Marsay's Discourses (Edinburgh, 1749).

> most books I have read. Pray make our compliments to him and Mrs Cheyne and the same to Mrs Stuart. I have in my heart much tenderness and esteem for her...[102]

Heylyn was probably being modest, but it is reassuring to find that at least one of Cheyne's closest friends, himself a student of the mystics, found the physician's metaphysical speculations abstruse.

Cheyne introduced Law to Boehme's works around 1733-5, but there is reason to suppose that their friendship had begun a decade earlier and grew out of Cheyne's association with the Garden circle. By 1723, Law had found a patron in Archibald Hutcheson, lawyer, economist and M.P. for Hastings (d. 1743). Hutcheson had a house in Westminster but probably knew Cheyne at Bath where he was made a freeman of the city in October 1721.[103] On his deathbed Hutcheson instructed Law to act as spiritual guardian to his wife Elizabeth (d. 1781). Along with her companion Miss. Gibbon, she consequently joined Law in his religious retreat at Northcliffe in 1743-4, where they founded a charity School. In the early 1780s, Elizabeth Hutcheson financed Law's disciples to publish the extravagant edition of Boehme mentioned above. Hutcheson emerges as another significant figure in this sometimes opaque web of associations. Unfortunately, his private life is veiled in obscurity, but significantly, in 1725 he was the dedicatee of Cheyne's Latin medical treatise De Naturae Fibrae. Between 1719 and 1723, Hutcheson, as one of the more astute political economists of the period, published several pamphlets attacking Walpole and the South Sea Scheme. Richardson printed them all and was probably sympathetic to Hutcheson's public stance of moderate Whig opposition to the Walpole administration. As Sale has noted, twenty-five years later Richardson still remembered Hutcheson with admiration, for in Clarissa, Lord M. quotes approvingly a maxim of 'my old friend Archibald Hutcheson' when advising Lovelace about a career in politics.[104] Earlier Cheyne had cited Hutcheson's exemplary longevity to encourage Richardson to be temperate.[105] Heylyn also enjoyed Hutcheson's patronage: he owned a finely bound inscribed author's presentation copy of the collected South-Sea pamphlets. To complete the picture, we find that when writing to Law in 1743 concerning plans to publish works by the Continental mystics, Lord Pitsligo reveals his friendship with Hutcheson's widow from which we can assume he had formerly known her recently deceased husband.[106] Hutcheson's precise role as

---

102 Unpublished draft in Ibid. green notebook, BCL.

103 *Bath Council Books* (Transcripts, Bath Reference Library), II, p. 60. Incidentally, Leake was made a Freeman in Jan. 1722, and Ralph Allen in March 1725.

104 Sale, p. 37 and Clarissa, L. 207, p. 666.

105 Mullett, p. 83.

106 Dr William's Library, MS 186.4 (ii).

patron to a circle of pietists during the 1720s remains obscure, but they already included Cheyne, Heylyn, Law, and probably Pitsligo. The extent of Richardson's involvement at this early date is still obscure, but clearly his contact pre-dates 1732-3, when his extant correspondence with Cheyne begins.

## 'Much Out of Fashion Here'

In the 1730s, a slimmer Cheyne enjoyed a 'Green Old Age', with his 'Faculties clear and bright'. He was far from reclusive. We know of trips to Oxford, Bristol, and fashionable Cheltenham Spa (1740). As late as 1741, when he was turning 70, he travelled to London for his daughter's wedding and had further plans to visit her. He continued his practice until the end, and a particularly detailed account (and accounts), of his care of the Earl of Aberdeen's lame, hysterical daughter in 1740-41, reveals his multiple roles as physician, guardian, educationalist and 'psychiatrist'.[107] We should be a little cautious in wholly accepting G. S. Rousseau's suggestion that 'this last decade...was the period, ironically when his medical practice soured' (*IDC*, p. 109). Although Cheyne clearly continued to enjoy the patronage of many leading statesmen and literati, professional hostility towards his practice continued unabated. With Bath's expansion, the elderly Cheyne found his 'system' increasingly challenged by rival therapists. Cheyne was particularly enraged by the remarks of fellow Scot, Dr David [?] Bayne-Kinnier, M. D., F.R.S., and F.R.C.P. (Edinburgh), in a New Essay on the Nerves and the Doctrine of the Animal Spirits Rationally Considered, (1738). Kinnier's account of the nerves is representative of a movement calling for firm empirical, anatomical observation, and the verification of the physiological basis for the traditional assumptions concerning the existence and function of *animal spirits*. Kinnier was deliberately trying to undermine the earlier, and somewhat conflicting pronouncements on the matter by his famous rival Cheyne by denouncing dangerous fashionable 'Schemists' who 'fancying every particular sort of food and diet, imagine it only to be cured by starving, or eating by weight, and drinking by measure, as if all constitutions were exactly the same' (p. 78). When he specifically addresses hysterical and hypochondriacal cases, Kinnier accepts much of the commonplace causes - idleness, luxury, study etc.- but dismisses 'strict diets of particular things' as a dangerous practice exposed by Arbuthnot's corrective Essay of Aliment. Kinnier provocatively uses Cheyne's own statements to support his own argument:

---

[107] A full discussion is reserved for a paper in preparation on Mary Chandler.

> For even supposing the immediate distemper to be removed, yet this being done by a strict milk diet, an universal weakness is thereby brought upon the body, lowness of spirits, and many other ill consequences, enumerated by Dr Cheyne in his *Essay of the Gout*, p. 18, where the danger of abstaining from flesh, fish and wine is strongly represented by examples that it is hard to deem a man in his right senses, who shall enter into such a diet, after all that is said of the danger of it by the Doctor, whose authority in this respect is not to be doubted (pp. 94-5).

Kinnier's thrusts hit home. Lady Murray wrote to Lord Marchmont in October 1737, that 'our Country Man the Beef eating *Doctor Kinnier* has just published a book against Cheyne which he writes me is good for nothing and can hurt no-body. But D[r]. K[ing] thinks he says many a good thing about the use of Bath Water. I have not yet red [sic] him.[108] By December, Cheyne was having to reassure Lady Murray that contrary to Kinnier's claims, her sister 'Grisie' was in no danger from her vegetable diet: 'he knew we would be puzzled out of what little wits we have: he has been harry'd out of his life'.[109]

Kinnier's attack was a late skirmish in Cheyne's battle with the 'Beaf Eaters' and 'Carnivores'. In 1734, he had actually been subjected to physical violence, describing himself as a martyr to therapeutic integrity. Writing at the time to Lady Huntingdon, Cheyne gives her very precise instructions for calling on him at Bath en route for Bristol, and the specialist gynaecological advice of his brother-in-law:

> You must give out here that you are ordered to Bristol before you came here and that you see me only to have directions nearer the spot...for there is a universal malice against me here, for sending people abroad ( as I did my Lady Walpole lately), and to Bristol, that I have been threatened with being mobbed, and some interested people spread it that I was sending the P. of Orange there, so that I durst scarce walk the streets, though there was not the least imagination for it, but on the contrary, for the lower people think it better to let people die here than send them elsewhere for their recovery. But this gives me no pain. I shall, I hope, allways do my duty and my best: Providence will take care of the rest, though I wish I had more of the wisdom of the serpent, provided I had the innocence of the dove with it.[110]

Cheyne subsequently wrote of being nearly 'pelted to death' on account of his directions to Bristol; this was probably by a mob of the notoriously riotous Bath chair attendants.

Cheyne felt trapped by conflicting loyalties to God and Mammon. The commercial atmosphere at Bath generated distrust. When writing to Lady Murray in 1738, urging

---

[108] SRO, GD. 158/1449, Letter 21. A comment in a letter of Lady Murray's of October 1738, when Kinnier's book was reprinted may refer to the same issue: 'if Do. Cheyne is in raptures at all, violent must his raptures be. i think I hear him roaring them out all round Bath. I'm glad of it for at least they can do no hurt'. Cheyne's anger is recorded in some occasional verses in The Bath Miscellany (1740), in which he is compared to a grass-eating bull' roaring' around the Pump Room.

[109] Ibid. Letter 27.

[110] Mullet Letters (Hastings), pp. 35-6.

her to allow her ailing father George Baillie to winter at Bath, Cheyne confessed to being 'weary of his trade and it of him':[111]

> were I not a Doctor I shou'd think Bath the Best winter quarters in England, take the Company, the Amusements and Lodgeings, the warmth with the waters, especially for Old and Valetudinary persons, that they do so little Good, is because a Regimen is not join'd with them...Bath Doctors are ty'd up from speaking out so freely of the benefit of it as others might, for tho I cannot aquit myself of Self Love & Interest, yet I think the advice in it self just and solid, but I leave you to the Direction of Providence (Mellerstain).

After dining with Cheyne at Bath in December 1741, Lady Huntingdon told her husband that she had spent the evening 'in the most pious and religious conversation, a thing hard to find here...I think he is more in favour with me, though much out of fashion here'.[112]

Cheyne had clearly come into some local disfavour at the close of his life. This may have just been the result of local commercial rivalry. There may have been a political element if, as seems likely, Cheyne became identified with the Patriotic Opposition led by his patients, Lord Marchmont, William Pulteney (editor of The Craftsman, who addressed the Commons concerning the Prince of Wales's annuity in 1737), George Lyttelton (the Prince's secretary), and Chesterfield (the dedicatee of An Essay on Regimen (who, along with Lyttelton edited the Opposition organ Common Sense). Both factors may account for the unusually critical tone of Cheyne's obituary in the Whig organ, The Bristol Oracle and Weekly Intelligencer of 16 April, 1743. This opens flatteringly enough with an account of Cheyne's rapid rise to fame as Pitcairne's pupil, but it concludes:

> [This] procur'd him a happy situation in a place [Bath], fam'd for the annual resort of the infirm, the Polite and the Gay part of the world, where he acquired general Esteem, and an early fortune; but ambitious to become Dictator in Physick, to which he was in no way equal, he quickly wrote himself out of character, had the misfortune long to survive his Fame and, at last, to fall into that Contempt, which is the natural product of little merit, and abundance of Vanity.

Any significant decline in Cheyne's popularity may have been the result of familiarity breeding contempt, as dietary faddism lost its immediate fashionable appeal, but his visible social proximity to the Methodists during the 1730s, and his enthusiastic publication of abstruse metaphysical speculations and heterodox Salvationist doctrines in An Essay on Regimen (1740) (his first commercial failure), all contributed to Cheyne's embattled, defensive stance. We should not exaggerate any such decline. The scathing tone of the Bristol Oracle's obituary is unique amongst

---

[111] SRO, GD. 158/1449, Letter 36.
[112] HMC Hastings, pp. 32-3.

numerous glowing tributes attesting to the fact that when he died, Cheyne was at the centre of a highly influential circle of younger pietists who shared his concern with spiritual and physical 'Restoration', and upheld analogy as the key to 'Spiritual Nature'.

In the decade after Cheyne's death, there was a distinct concentration of pietists in the Bath-Bristol area. Many of them, including Middleton, continued Cheyne and Law's close contact with Methodism. Some of their fascinating interrelations have been described by Jonathan Barry in his detailed essay *Piety and the Patient: Medicine and Religion in Eighteenth-Century Bristol,* in Patients and Practitioners (1985), and therefore only the merest summary will be offered here. Barry's account, which admirably shows the continued connection between religious and medical concerns in this movement, focuses on the diaries of the Bristol accountant, pietist and amateur healer, Thomas Dyer, who sympathetically recorded the deaths of both Cheyne and Middleton, the last of whom (at least), he knew personally. The loose circle of ecumenical quietists with whom Dyer associated did not always agree, but they shared an interest in William Law's mystical theology as the key to a spiritual restoration, and an aversion to a prevalent mechanistic version of Newtonianism.

Typically, Dyer studied such works as Boehme, Marsay, Guyon, Poiret and Law, and assisted in the related editing projects of the evangelical Bristol bookseller Thomas Mills, who printed works like Boehme's The Way to Christ Discovered and Described (Bristol 1775), An Address to all Orders of Men Recommending the Works of William Law etc. (Bristol 1781), and numerous cheap 'Repository Tracts'. Like Wesley, Dyer became a fashionable private practitioner in electrical therapy as a result of absorbing Law's Behmenist analogy between fire and divine energy: 'Electrical Fire' being evidence that an active fire pervades nature. He helped to edit the theosophical study Fire Analysed (Bristol 1771), by his friend Richard Symes, the Rector of St Warburgh's (Bristol), a correspondent of Law who had once been Cheyne's disciple, and who later belonged to Hannah More's evangelical group. (More, incidentally, being the author of Sensibility). Both Symes and Dyer had contact with other electricians, including Joseph Priestly. Their friend, Stephen Penny, endorsed Cheyne's medico-religious doctrines in his Letters on the Fall and Restoration of Mankind (Bristol 1765). We should add the name of John Robertson, Cheyne's translator, by now a Hutchinsonian, to this close-knit group of West Country followers, and of course David Hartley, who had not forgotten his conversations with Cheyne when he published his account of the relationship between 'Sensory Vibrations', and the theopathic love of God in Observations on Man (1749).

# 9

# THE MAGNUM OPUS

'All Booksellers I fear are Curls by Profession'. (Cheyne to Richardson, 1739)

## Cheyne and the Booktrade

By 1737, Cheyne had accumulated a number of manuscripts in which he had recorded his mature thoughts on medicine and metaphysics. As his commitment to mysticism deepened, he zealously circulated this material amongst his distinguished patients. Lord Chesterfield, the eventual dedicatee of An Essay on Regimen, wrote to Lyttelton in 1739:

> I have had the pleasure...of reading a great part of your friend Cheyne's *magnum opus*. He has found out the whole secret of metaphysics, and is kind enough to communicate it to the public, under the title, indeed, of *Conjectures*, but he assured me as a friend, that he did that only out of modesty, for that by the living God he could mathematically demonstrate the truth of every conjecture, as he pretty fairly hints in his motto, which is, *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*. He snarls louder, grins fiercer, and is more sublimely mad than when you saw him.[1]

In the autumn of 1737, Cheyne sent his *Magnum Opus* to his patient and printer Samuel Richardson, asking for his opinion of 'it's merit in general, and also if it will be best to bring it out into One or Two Volumes'. He had already approached some booksellers, wanting two hundred guineas for it, knowing 'it may not be a rapid seller; yet it will be a dureable one'.[2] In January 1738, the manuscript went temporarily astray in transit but this was a minor anxiety in a bitter and protracted pre-publication history, in which Richardson acted as a remarkably patient mediator between Cheyne and his booksellers.[3]

The manuscript was eventually published as two companion volumes with typically weighty titles: An Essay on Regimen; to which are attached Five Discourses, Medical, Moral and Philosophical, serving to illustrate the Principles and Theory of Philosophical Medicine and serving to point out some of its Moral Consequences (1740), and The Natural Method of Cureing the Diseases of the Body and the Disorders of the Mind, Depending on the Body (1742). Cheyne's *Magnum*

---

[1] Chesterfield, Letters (1932), II, p. 358.

[2] Mullett, Letters, VI, p. 35. Where convenient, many citations to these letters in this chapter are hereafter provided in the main text. Roman numerals refer to Mullett's ordering of the letters. Place of posting is invariably Bath. Full dates are only given when relevant.

[3] Mullett, Letters, VII, pp. 34-5; VIII, pp. 36-7.

*Opus* was in many respects a work of recapitulation. Space forbids any detailed discussion of the more practical medical aspects of these two books, although they are integral to the whole. Cheyne's mature 'Rules' are refined in Part I of An Essay on Regimen throughout the Natural Method. The five *Discourses* or *Conjectures* are more theoretical, except *Discourse II*, entitled descriptively, *Philosophical Conjectures about the Preference of Vegetable to Animal Food, and the End of and Design of Providence in appointing the First, and on Trial, permitting the Latter*. Cheyne's moral, scriptural, historical and anthropological arguments in this last piece would deserve more attention within any further discussion of the debates about luxury and primitivism.

The other *Discourses* of 1740 warrant particular consideration within the present account of Cheyne's developing theosophy although this is complicated by the problems of chronology and repetition. Cheyne himself explains in the Preface that the *Discourses* were composed at different times but with 'one general Scheme, and one manner of free Philosophizing, and easy Conjecturing', and admits that for want of revision the result is somewhat 'loose, unguarded...immethodical' (pp. iii-iv). Anita Guerrini has noted the difficulties in trying to extract a very clear account of Cheyne's mature 'System' from this occasionally contradictory material, in the context of her particular concern to map Cheyne's shifting Newtonianism.[4] Although it is impossible to establish the precise degree to which Cheyne had formulated the ideas represented here in the years immediately after his first breakdown, there is no reason to doubt the truth of his own assertion in 1740 that his basic principles never radically altered. Many of the concepts in Part II of the Principles (1715) are repeated and refined. However, Cheyne's letters to Richardson allow for a careful reconstruction of the pre-publication history of the *Magnum Opus*. This not only provides a more precise dating of the material but it gives an important insight into Cheyne's own perception of what he knew would be his intellectual 'Last Will and Testament'.

Cheyne's successful Essay of Health (1724) had marked the beginning of his relationship with Richardson's brother-in-law, James Leake of Bath, who in partnership with George Strahan became Cheyne's bookseller. It was probably because of this family connection that Richardson came to print The English Malady (1733), (also published by Leake and Strahan), and the eighth edition of the Essay of Health (1734). Cheyne grew to dislike Leake: 'the manner of the Man is not to my

---

[4] Guerrini, *Keill*, p. 263. Unfortunately Guerrini's discussion of Cheyne's mature ideas on dualism is compromised by the fact that her chronology of composition is faulty, and, more worryingly, she confuses the published titles of the *Conjectures*, which she then attempts to analyse within this flawed schema.

taste. Vanity, Junketing, and Squeezing, Medling and Forwardness are not Qualifications I admire', but to avoid trouble Cheyne decided to deal with him again (VIII, p. 36).[5] Constant complaints were to characterize his subsequent dealings: Cheyne made exacting demands of his booksellers, constantly warning about the effects of 'cheapening':

> I wonder you make your modern Books in so small a Type and so bad a Paper. It must certainly disgust it to many, the tender and old who only read Books, and gives an ill Impression of a Book before its Character is established. And it is the only Thing I have to complain of Pamela, which entertained me and all mine (for which I thank you) extremely (XL, pp. 63-4).

He had not forgiven his 'former dealers' for spoiling The English Malady in this manner (VIII, p. 36). Cheyne thought that his readership of 'nervous valetudinarian low-livers' formed an important group of bookbuyers whose practical needs should be indulged. Careful proofreading was laborious but essential: 'the Subject is abstracted, obscure and difficult; and if it be incorrectly printed, it will be unintelligible and intirely spoil the sale' (X, p. 41). Cheyne even offered to pay Richardson for personally proofreading second sheets and overseeing the printing if Leake was dissatisfied with these exceptional demands: 'The Subject you see will be nice and abstracted, if you read it with Attention, you'll easily find if it's Sense and Plain, and not suffer it to go otherwise' (XIII, p.42).

By October 1738, Cheyne was exasperated with delay in the production of copy, but Leake approved of a fresh plan to make two distinct books. At this stage the first book contained 'Philosophical Amusements in Three Dissertations' and 'The Natural Method of Cure', the first being intended as 'introductory to this more practical work', making 'the whole two Pieces better understood, relished and profitable' (Ibid..). If nothing could be settled with Strahan and Leake, Cheyne planned to approach Charles Rivington and intended waiting at least a year before publishing the second book: 'I think it is by no means proper they should come out together. This will wheten the Appetite and introduce the other. The other would not be understood without this, and this would not be studied if the other was not published. But at last they will mutually support one another!' (XIV, p. 43). Anxious to publish the first part 'by New years day to entertain the Town, and put them in good humour', by 14 October

---

[5] Cheyne wanted Strahan and Leake to share his new book with 'one Anderson, a Kinsman of mine at Gay's Head in Fleetstreet, to give a little Credit, being a Beginner'. His attachment to Strahan was also maintained through kinship with Margaret Cheyne. An alternative offer came from Charles and Thomas Woodward, through a Mr Clarke (a lawyer?), of '£120 down, 50 Books off the first Impression of 2,000 copies on the second of 2,000 more, another 50 for the property' (Ibid..). As Mullett notes, although this was an above average price for the manuscript, Cheyne tried to raise it to '250 guineas with 50 bound Books at once and give up the Property directly'.

Cheyne was dismayed at the slow return of 'incorrect' sheets, informing Richardson that he could not 'understand your marks' (XIV and XV, pp. 43-4). By 18 November he was close to despair:

> I am very sorry to give you whom I heartily love and esteem so much trouble. I have paid for many Copies of the Manuscript since it was first designed, but the Subject is delicate and obscure and I would do my best as my Business and Spirits will hold. I fear it will never be finished; so many Obstacles come in the Way. The Print I am pleased with; the Paper is abominable; but the Avarice, Falsehood, and Ingratitude of the Undertakers and the vexations they give me by wrongheadedness, I believe will make me tired out at last. If it were not a little Amusement that serves me at leisure Hours no Consideration should make me go on (XVI, p. 44).

Although Cheyne's denial of any commercial interest was rather disingenuous, he had already made a large fortune. Writing, he insisted, was just an innocent diversion for one 'incapable of sensual amusements', but he flattered himself that he might do a little good in the process. This is the voice of the gentleman scholar, a role for which Cheyne was educated. Although a poor relation of nobility in a country seen by many Englishmen to be itself a poor relation, Cheyne's adherence to the traditional values of scholarly patronage is reflected in his dedications (to Roxburghe, Bateman, Huntingdon, and Chesterfield). But Cheyne's fashionable success stemmed from his ability to write for a much wider readership than the very scholarly one to which his early efforts were aimed. In so doing, both he and his booksellers became beneficiaries of the rapid process of commercial expansion that characterises early eighteenth-century English publishing history. His career spans this period of change and illustrates the shifting values involved. In Cheyne's tirades against Leake's and Strahan's mercenary commercial interest, we see an older traditional concept of authorship coming into conflict with a new commercial spirit.

Cheyne clung to traditional values of scholarly dilettanteism but was fully aware of his commercial potential as an author: 'Since I know that till I have misbehaved egregiously and sunk my Reputation below what I, while I have my Senses, and live now, ever can, any Thing I now Print will sell and enrich the Proprietor, were it a mere Almanack: and since I know this is the very best and most interesting Piece I ever wrote, I shall not let such ingrateful Mortals fatten on my spoils, having been offered a great deal more than I ask by others'.[6] By the end of November 1738, appeased by the gift of some 'excellent oysters' and better quality paper, Cheyne was apologising for his irritability: 'my dealers are odd Men; were it not for Conscience

---

[6] XVIII, pp. 53-4. G. S. Rousseau has remarked that the frequent reprinting of his works brought Strahan and Leake a great deal of profit. Cheyne may have sold the 'property' of these works to his booksellers (as he was later compelled to do with the two books under discussion), but he certainly profited indirectly through the effect upon his practice and general reputation.

Sake and Old Aquaintance I would never deal with them. They are the most wrongheaded Persons and the most gripeing I ever knew' (XVII, p. 45). One suspects that by this time the feeling was mutual. In a short note acknowledging the receipt of some final proof sheets, he was in despair and threatened to burn the rest of the copy; 'the Paper is abominable...It is an ill Omen, so many Discouragements...' (XX, p. 45).

Part of the problem was that Cheyne kept adding material to the work in progress. On 18 December 1738, Cheyne returned the corrected sheets of the last two Discourses of Part II of what he calls the 'general Method of Cure' (i.e., An Essay on Regimen) (XIX, p. 45), but by February 1738, Cheyne had written two more 'Discourses of Double the length of the Three first' (XX, p. 46). These were quite clearly Discourse I, entitled *Conjectures about the Nature and Qualities of the original Animal Body, and of its Progressive State, in its Several Stages of Existence*, and Discourse IV, *on Spiritual Nature and the Human Spirit in Particular.* In 1739 he was working on a short section 'answering objections', and designed to make some 'uncommon and sublime matters' more intelligible which finally appeared as the *Miscellaneous Observations* at the close of (Part II) (XXVI, p. 51). The booksellers main objection related to these additions. Only two out of the three earlier Discourses were included in the original manuscript approved by Leake, and now there were five. The very abstruse nature of the new material may have been another factor. Consequently, Cheyne asked Richardson to approach a certain Mr Wilson on his behalf with a view to selling the sheets after paying Leake off for the basic costs of printing.

The book never appeared at New Year. Cheyne had actually refused to visit Strahan during a Christmas visit to London. He also gave the cold shoulder to 'insolent' Leake, who, he claimed had actually 'complained he had a hard Bargain of me to my own Son...he and Strahan are in some underhand dealings...I would willingly get free of them both' (XX, p. 46). Richardson was instrumental in patching up relations between Leake and Cheyne. By 3 February 1739, Cheyne had made a fresh agreement with Leake —'the worst judging, wrongheaded, insolent, Fellow living, whom none can oblige but by Flattery and Junketing'—and Strahan—'a poor-Spirited, little-minded Creature that loses many sheep for a Half-pennyworth of tar' (XXI, p.46). Leake promised a thousand copies would be printed on good paper, but Cheyne feared Strahan would cheat all concerned: 'all Booksellers are Curls by profession', he cursed (XXIII, p. 48). It was May 1739 before Cheyne could send the final sheets of An Essay on Regimen to Lord Huntingdon for his approval as dedicatee. In June he was still composing abstracts of each *Discourse*, 'which all my friends approve[s] extremely and which will make a new System of Physic and

Philosophy read more prettily' (XXV, p. 50). Oddly, a promise to also make 'honourable mention' of Richardson in the dedication never materialized.

Cheyne thought his 'dealers' were getting a bargain because 'First or Last I think this Work of the greatest Consequence and value of anything I have been concerned in' (XXIV, p. 49). He insisted that his book presented a radically innovative philosophy of medicine and 'Universal Cure'. Despite his zealous vanity, he was conscious enough of popular taste to actually hold back the publication of the practical work in order to manipulate the sales of the more theoretical part. In the event, his instruction to Richardson that the Natural Method must not be published until the Essay on Regimen 'has had its run and glutted the Kingdoms', proved sadly misguided. The contract remained unsettled and Cheyne asked Richardson to intervene 'as a Christian and a Brother' believing that Leake's indifferent use of him stemmed more 'from his head than his heart' (XXVII, p. 51). He stubbornly refused to have anything to do with Strahan, and was now demanding '100 guineas down for each book, 50 copies bound and gilt, and a piece of Plate at 20, which was the Agreement for The Natural Method of Cure (Ibid..). He set the bookdealers a week to accept and determined to give the contract to someone else if Richardson thought fit. However, he acknowledged that the new work was 'a good deal Philosophical and Speculative and much out of reach of common readers' so he could not predict 'whether it will run or not so as to answer their rapaciousness'. He also ridiculed Richardson's method of arriving at the value of a book to its author by simply counting the number of sheets: 'else Pope's Booksellers would have a bad time of it' (XXVIII-XXVII, p. 52-3). He notes that his new book is about the same size as The English Malady, for which he received '100 bound copies and as much Money, and some Books into the bargain' (Ibid.). He thought, wrongly, that the Essay on Regimen was more commercial: 'I think it will make a thorough Revolution in physic and Philosophy in Time, but that will be as providence will see fit! When I am dead perhaps, and the malice and envy gone, it may sink into the honest and thinking Part' (XXVII, p. 53). The usual complaints continued through the Summer of 1739 and it was 12 September before he had 'agreed finally with Leake', though Strahan had still not accepted the final offer (XXXIII, p. 56). It was not to be the end of the matter!

## Publication and Response

An Essay on Regimen has 1740 on the title page, but was finally published by Rivington and Strahan by 26 October 1739, when Cheyne asked Richardson to 'be so good as...to acquaint me what you learn or hear among the Criticks and Conoisseurs

about my Book, and how it takes and passes off in your Metropolis' (XXXIV, p. 58). Leake's commercial activities remained a thorn in Cheyne's side:

> It is an inexpressable disadvantage to it here, Mr Leake's lending Books by Subscription. And above Thirty has been out among subscribers at a Time and they lend it to double the Number all which would certainly have bought it elsewhere to satisfy their Curiosity and Ardour for Novelty, and that will ruin it's Sale here. I will never publish again but at Midsummer (XXXIV, p. 58).

Although Cheyne's coterie of scholarly disciples read it with interest, the work was not generally popular. Chesterfield wrote thanking Cheyne for his presentation copy observing that:

> The physical part is extremely good, and the metaphysical part may be so too, for what I know; and I believe it is; for, as I look upon all metaphysics to be guess-work of imagination, I know no imagination likelier to hit upon the right than yours: I will take your guess against any other metaphysics whatsoever. That part which is founded upon knowledge and experience, I look upon as a work of public utility; and for which the present age and posterity may be obliged to you, if they will be pleased to follow it.[7]

For many, the practical section was too familiar and the rest too abstruse or unorthodox. It was probably Fielding who was responsible for the satire on Cheyne's 'Philosophical, Physical and Theological Heresies' in The Tryal of Colley Cibber (1740), where Cheyne is arraigned alongside Cibber for his 'murder' of the English Language in the *Philosophical Discourses,* and where Pope is charged with letting him get away with it.

Despite the taunts, Cheyne remained undismayed: 'I have the approbation of the most intelligent and serious; for others I wish them well. I know if it be boggled at, at first, Time and Maturity will force its Way, for I know it is the best, most useful, and solid Work I ever composed (XXV, p. 59). Hoping to boost the sales, he wished there was a way to circulate the book on the Continent. By the spring it was becoming clear that the book was not a commercial success, despite the existence of complimentary letters from the hands of 'the best Judges in England' which Cheyne put before Leake. Crestfallen, Cheyne took to preparing the copy for the companion title, swearing that if that also miscarried he would 'bid adieu to writing books', it being imprudent to 'throw even small pearls before Swine' (XXXVII, p. 61).

On 13 December 1740 Cheyne had to ask Richardson to settle his account with Rivington and arrange for the storage of the remaindered sheets of An Essay on Regimen: 'it is the first of this Kind and shall be the last though I have several things finished by me, but I am much of Sir Walter Raleigh's opinion, and the Booksellers

---

[7] Chesterfield, Letters, II, p. 494-5.

shall not have my lucubrations to fringe the rails of bedlam though I swear it is the best Book I ever wrote, however unpopular' (L, p. 64). On 12 February, 1741, Cheyne gave his considered verdict on the unfortunate enterprise, and there may be some truth in his blaming Leake for unadvisedly printing too many copies (3,000, Cheyne claimed). Many of his sympathetic literary friends had made 'severe reflections' upon the booksellers and 'specious Curls was the gentlest Expression' (XLI, p. 65). He was soon going to be in London to attend his daughter's wedding and would ensure that Richardson was paid all that was necessary to clear him with 'the dealers who would starve many a poor ingenious Man as I personally know and some even to death' (Ibid..). Somewhat smugly, he thanked God that they were unable to harm him financially, but he wrote at length on how the whole affair had alienated him from the idea of further authorship. Meanwhile, a sympathetic Richardson ensured that Cheyne was relieved of all former financial obligations and he personally offered to take over as Cheyne's sole publisher, accepting full responsibility for The Natural Method. Cheyne told Pope of Richardson's kindness, which in turn prompted a complimentary message from the poet to the novelist regarding the merits of Pamela. It is not known if the opportunity arose for Cheyne to fulfil his offer to introduce Richardson to Pope (XLI, p. 65).

Cheyne did not want to have any bookseller's name connected with the new book and asked Richardson to take complete control of it. His friends all assured him it would be more popular than the last one, 'though it be more to the Vulgar taste and capacity' (XLIV, p. 70). Although he had material to add, he did not want to make it tediously long or too expensive. Part of the manuscript had been sent to Oxford where it had been 'polished a bit in the language' (probably by William King), (XLV, p. 71). Meanwhile, Strahan reapproached Cheyne through his wife (a relative). To avoid more arguments, Cheyne offered him all the remaining sheets of the last book and the sole rights to the new one in return for paying £80 to Leake and Rivington, and a further payment to Cheyne of £125 pounds. Cheyne lost his resolve: 'I fear I must have some Bookseller to own it, for I am told they have it in their Power to damn the best Book ever printed (XLV, p.71).

With little encouragement from Strahan, Cheyne stuck to his original offer of £125 for The Natural Method, and abandoned the idea of immediately re-issuing An Essay on Regimen. Eventually, he planned to have fresh title pages printed calling the first book 'the Theory' and the second 'the Practice of Physic in 2 Vols'. (XLVII, p. 73).[8] He preferred to have Richardson take over sole ownership of the The Natural

---

[8] Cheyne's plan was never fulfilled. A 'second edition' of An Essay on Regimen dated 1740, was probably just a reissue of the remaindered sheets that Strahan purchased. A 'third edition' dated 1753,

Method to get it out by the Christmas holidays but Cheyne compromised by accepting an offer from Strahan and John and Paul Knapton, whereby he was paid £250 for the 'Assignation to the Property' for all copies of both books, except for fifty complimentary copies, two of which were to have Turkey bindings. He was particularly pleased because this settlement freed Richardson (who handled all arrangements), from his generous but unwise offer of acting as Cheyne's sole publisher. By the end of December, Cheyne had received a batch of complimentary copies and was pleased with 'the Print, Paper, and Binding' (XLIX, p. 75; LII, p. 79; LIII, p. 81).

On 2 February 1742, Cheyne asked Richardson for news of the reaction to The Natural Method in London; 'It is wonderfully cried up even here [Bath], even by Doctors themselves, and I have already high Compliments from them and 3 Bishops, and all say that Strahan will get a Power of Money by it and sell all the former' (LIV, p. 83). He insisted that without Richardson's encouragement the book never would have appeared. Although he had little more to say regarding medicine, he 'must write for a pastime', and still had other pieces by him, probably on metaphysics and theology. Cheyne heard that the sales were good but noted that 'Authors seldom hear the truth but when their Booksellers Interest calls' (LX, p. 85). By the beginning of April, Richardson was telling Cheyne that the book had sold well, although Cheyne, with no news from the booksellers, was assuming the opposite. If he did not soon 'see the Colour of their Coin for it', he threatened to 'call on them by a troublesome Dun'.[9] Cheyne enjoyed something of his former success with The Natural Method although it does not seem to have been a best seller like An Essay of Health. Unlike An Essay on Regimen, an influential French translation of The Natural Method appeared at Paris in 1749.

By November 1742, Cheyne, asked Richardson if there was a need of a revised edition: 'I hear much of the Success of the Book and the satisfaction it gives to every one of taste and Sobriety except the brethren, but from them I fear Nothing (LXXV, p. 118). He had plans to take up Richardson's suggestion that he should produce 'a Valetudinarian [directory?] in all possible Cases, in a small Pocket Volume' as 'the Corner-Stone and Cornish to my medical and philosophical labours' but it never

---

appeared with the uncut sheet of fly titles for each discourse (printed at the last minute by Richardson and bound in their proper positions in the first edition), placed arbitrarily in the contents section. This was published by D. Browne who at George Strahan's death bought some of his copyrights in partnership with Alexander Strahan.

[9] LVIII, p. 90. Cheyne finally settled with Strahan and the Knaptons, getting only £125 for The Natural Method, plus 50 bound and gilt complimentary copies, and £80 for the remaining sheets of the Essay on Regimen (LXII, p. 97).

materialized (XXVIII, p. 54). Cheyne died before hearing any more from Strahan. He had spent the closing years of his life swearing that he would never have anything more to do with booksellers. He was right.

**The True Philosophy**

Writing to Pope, from Bath in 1736, Lyttelton rejoiced at his own recovery under the directions of 'the Immortal Doctor Cheyney', whilst passing on the Doctor's message to Pope that 'he [Cheyne] shall live at least two centuries by being a Real and practical Philosopher, while such Gluttonous Pretenders to Philosophy as You, Dr Swift, and My Lord Bolingbroke die of Eating and Drinking at Fourscore'.[10] Behind Cheyne's raillery, in what was certainly one of many similar exchanges lay a genuine sense of religious purpose and a profoundly different notion of the true meaning of philosophical enlightenment, to that encouraged by the deist, Bolingbroke.

The surviving Scriblerians could read in Cheyne's Preface to An Essay on Regimen, that 'True Philosophy is the Science of Living the most happily through the whole period of our Existence...Physic is one Branch of this Philosophy and regards but one part of our Composition and but for a small period of our Duration' (p. ii). But Cheyne was far from being an Epicurean. He perceived individual existence as part of a purposeful divine order. The art of medicine should be viewed within a wider providential perspective which 'takes in the whole extent of our Being, from its most distant beginning, to its most advanced Stages, possible or conceivable'. Cheyne contrasted his 'True Philosophy' with what he believed to be the limited vision of the sceptical followers of Lockeian empiricism, the promoters of an entirely mechanistic Newtonianism and the nominal Christianity of deists and infidels (Ibid., pp. 18-9). Although he always continued to acknowledge Newton's achievements, by the 1730s, if not earlier, Cheyne's youthful optimism regarding the millennialist significance of Newton's unlocking of the secret workings of nature, had become qualified. Implicit in his mature writings is the suggestion that some Newtonians turned their master into a false-God, whilst scoffing at further attempts to unlock the mysteries of nature as millennial revelation. Shortly before Cheyne's death, this charge was made more explicit by William Law with his claim that Newton derived the theory of Attraction from Boehme, and it was taken up by Law's followers. In his *Conjectures,*published in 1740, Cheyne moves closer then ever to abandoning (though not rejecting),

---

[10] Pope, Corr, IV, p. 47.

Newton.[11] He deliberately makes a comparison between the 'higher' intuitive spiritual faculties needed for the advancement of spiritual insight and the empirical methods of his early Newtonian colleagues:

> *Scripture, Revelation*, and our own inward *Feelings* of the Operations of our Soul give the *Data* (viz. the general Propositions, the accurate observations on them), *analogous* to *Mr Flamsteed's* or *Dr Halley's* Observations of the *Allipses* [sic] of the Moon to the Fix'd Stars' (p. 135).

This slightly incongruous methodological analogy is in keeping with his overall attempt to reconcile a sentimental epistemology with Newton's model of a law-abiding creation.[12] Its very incongruity serves to highlight the originality of Cheyne's efforts to reconcile his early commitment to mathematical methods of analysis with his pietist faith in a moral sense reliant upon intuitive, subjective, self-reflection. By the late 1730s, Cheyne was insisting more than ever that our limited faculties only give us glimpses of the great plan of Divine Providence, in fact a conviction which he continued to argue was true to the original spirit of Newton's work as a prophet of the millennium.

In Cheyne's *Conjectures*, his earlier concern with an all-pervasive Divine Analogy has developed into a highly imaginative, poetic vision of a spiritualised nature. In Discourse V, *Conjectures on Natural Analogy, its Law and some of its Consequences*, he goes so far as to declare that 'Analogy and its Appendages, *Type, Allusion, Similitude, Parable, Hieroglyphic*, and *Allegory* ( all more remote or nearer Approaches to Analogy), is the only natural Language the Deity can speak to us at present under our Degeneracy and *Lapse*' (ER, p. 229). 'The Material World' represents a 'Transcript of the Spiritual', and 'the Laws and Oeconomy of the *one* will be analogous and correspond with those of the *other'*. God's 'sole, *natural*, articulat, indelible and Universal language can possibly be no other than his Works of Wonder *ad extra*: *The Heavens declare the Glory of God*: by the Characters and *Hieroglyphics* intimately impress'd on them; and they can only be read or understood by *Analogy to Him*, to *us*, and to *one another'*(ER, p. 262). The Sun and the planets, for example, are a metaphor for God and the lapsed creatures who are being slowly drawn back into God's orbit. Cheyne muses rapturously that the Sun's light 'is an *Image* of the *Light*

---

[11] It should be noted that his mystical associate Chevalier Ramsay did reject Newtonianism outright as the product of fallen reason.

[12] Byrom contrasts 'Bolingbrokian Reason' with Behmenist 'Inspiration' in verses descriptively entitled *A Contrast Between Human Reason and Divine Illumination* (1753?) (Poems, II, ii, pp. 329-10). This versifies ideas found in Law's Way to Divine Knowledge (1752). See also Byrom's verses, *Thoughts Upon Human Reason* (pp. 336-8), and *On Faith, Reason and Sight, Considered as Three Distinct Mediums of Human Perception* (pp. 339-41). The latter versifies Metternicht's theosophy.

*which enlightens every Man that comes into the World*; an *Emblem* of Him who came forth from the *Father of Lights*; the *Light* and *Son* of the New *Jerusalem*, and of *Spiritual Nature*' (ER, p. 234). As G. S. Rousseau cogently observes, Cheyne's so-called 'Newtonian Metaphysics' became increasingly based upon 'a set of poetic analogies derivative from—pure love', employing similitudes for which 'nothing in the empirical universe could even begin to corroborate' (*IDC*, p. 117). Cheyne also employed analogy and 'similitude' in his use of the Bible as an ultimate authority for his metaphysics. In *Discourse* IV (Sec. 15), he reveals his exposure to Cabbalism when he argues that the biblical account of the Fall, like the rest of Scripture, has 'a *literal, natural* and material meaning', but also a more profound spiritual meaning. This hermeneutic hierarchy is only accessible in accordance with progressive degrees of spiritual initiation. 'More specific and detailed Accounts' would have only 'nourished *Pride*, *Presumption*, and *Self-Sufficiency* and so sunk us deeper' (p. 133-5).

Cheyne's obsession with analogy could become quite absurd, as in his 'splenetick' answer to a report on the pleasures of Italy from his patient George Baillie:

> As to your Vesuvius, I never intend to visit it. I never could bear a surprise or a jumble. Your Musick, fine weather, winter greens, & delicat fruit wou'd not recompense me. The wind, steams and fermentations from a jumble of mixt & combating atoms in the Gutts of the Earth produces your Earthquakes in the same Manner by the same phylosophy & from the same Causes that salt herring, Burton Ale, sweet wines, with now and then a Gundy mixt jaring & fighting, produces yout Fitts (Mellerstain).

Behind this comic connection between geological, gastric, and nervous disturbances lay a genuine commitment to an hermetic doctrine of a natural correspondence. Cheyne's mature analogies between the 'inner' and 'outer' man belong to a mystic tradition which may be traced through from Plato, St John and St Paul, to Origen, Gregory Nyssa, St Augustine, the Neo-Platonists, Paracelsus, and Boehme. As William Law wrote in 1740, 'the outward world is but a glass or representation of the inward'.[13]

Discourses I and IV owe much to Cheyne's reading of Marsay who employed a quietist interpretation of this concept which internalised the millennial 'Restoration' as a private psychodrama taking place within each individual.[14] At the heart of his mature theodicy lies a typically Behmenist interpretation of the Fall as a psychological lapse from mental harmony. Earthquakes, pestilence, inclement weather, famine, extremes of temperature, are all evidence of the Fall, but of equal, if

---

13 Christian Regeneration, p. 172. See Hobhouse, Selected Writings, p. 19 and p. 328.

14 Generically, Cheyne's *Case of the Author* belongs within the literary manifestation of this tradition, the spiritual autobiography traceable to St Augustine (M. H. Abrams The Correspondent Breeze: Essays in English Romanticism (1984), Ch., 9, Part iii, 'The Apocalypse Within', pp. 240-245).

not greater importance, is the evidence within people's hearts of disharmony and dissatisfaction: 'we...have yet a Notion and *Idea* of a better State of Being and Acting, ...and wish and pant after it...every honest and thinking Person must find *A Law in his Members, that Wars against the Law of his Mind*, ...Now this is called the *Lapse* or Fall; and if this State of Imperfection last for ever, so must the *Fall*; till this Desire or Panting be satisfied, the intelligent Creature cannot be completely happy' (ER, p. 130). We are tormented 'with Desires, Impressions, and Pantings' after a more perfect state of being. Cheyne argues that a just God would not have implanted such yearnings unless he intended to return his creatures to a state of perfection but misdirected creaturely desires postpone the eventual restoration of God's creatures to their source. Cheyne's various 'crises' had encouraged him to see the bodily existence as a book of revelation in which an original dialectical struggle between God and his creation is being continually re-enacted in a providential drama: 'May not *Paradise* mean...the *Three* original and fundamental Powers of the Soul, *Living, Activity, or Liberty* and *Intelligence*...intrusted with us finite Intelligences, to cultivate, improve and exalt ?' (p. 137). Heaven and Hell are essentially states of mind and the story of the lapse may be 'more feelingly Allegoriz'd' as a progressive selfish fall from 'pure Love, Naked Faith and Trust and Universal resignation' (p. 138). The ultimate means to bring about a 'Restoration' to Edenic sanity is through God's grace.

In Discourse IV, Cheyne examines the origins of human life. He turns from the individual to the generic to consider the genesis of the spirit into the world of the flesh and he considers the fundamental structure of matter as it constitutes our earthly tabernacle. He makes a complex analogy between the spiritual 'genesis' of intelligent beings and the Creation story in Genesis, and rejects purely mechanistic notions of generation, emphasising the fact that humans carry within them a spiritual element or 'Divine Spark'. He suggests that the pre-lapsarian, harmoniously ordered 'primitive animal body' was made up of a pure, rarefied element, 'infinitely more subtile and refined than the Matter of Light, more elastic than the finest *Aether* etc. so that it possessed infinite attractive powers and could pervade all gross bodies without resistance or pain'. The spirit remains 'cocooned' within 'the primitive *Creation* body' through whatever 'Courser Elements' it may pass through on a journey that ultimately will return it to God. In our present lapsed condition our natural powers are 'tied down, sopited, and fettered' at our entry into material, rational life which is a period of purification through pain. Man's intellectual and spiritual powers are hindered by the resistance of gross matter, which acts like 'bonds, fetters, and Chains made of these *Elements*'. Even the most wise man on earth, was, according to this progressive process, once like a mere vegetable or plant, then like a brute beast, and only recently

the 'rational and complete Man' (Ibid). Ultimate spiritual bondage is witnessed in the phenomena of sleep, 'and in some Diseases, *Syncope's*'. His description of the lapsed, material body as the 'second Adamical Machine' reveals his exposure to the unorthodox Behmenist notion (found in Marsay, and notably in Bourignon), that Man was actually created twice, once as Adam, and then a second time as Adam/Kadmon (ER, p. 162). Cheyne entertains the Neo-Platonic concept that sexual differentiation, like all division and 'contraries' is symptomatic of the Fall, the original spiritual creatures having been androgynous. He even considers the Pythagorean concept of the transmigration of souls, which conveniently explains how varying degrees of sinfulness might be expiated before a final restoration and in doing so he gets very carried away trying to explain the nature of the 'Astral Vehicles' in which spirits are sent to the planets to await the Restoration.

As G. S. Rousseau has noted, there is strong element of Christian Stoicism in the Cheyne's commitment to the redemptive power of suffering. In a long, moving passage near the opening of An Essay on Regimen, he describes life as one 'vale of tears': '*Pain, Suffering, and Misery* is as natural and necessary...as Existence is...And Old Age (the cardinal Disease of Human Life), finishes the dark scene of Human Misery with perpetual Aches, Sores, and Infirmities of Body and Mind; a more sensible Dotage and Childhood, a *Taedium Vitae* with a Desire of Dissolution, which is yet accompanied with a terrible Dread of it' (ER, pp. 23-4). Imagery of criminality, imprisonment, punishment and restraint pervade his accounts of earthly existence:

> This our *Planet* and its Appendages, is really and literally a Prison or Goal, a Place of banishment, of Pains and Punishment for a certain Period of Time, to lapsed sentient and intelligent beings: like *Siberia* among the *Russians*, the *Bastille*, or the *Pierre incise* with the *French*, or the *Plantations* or *Newgate* among us. And the Inhabitants of both Kinds, sentient and intelligent, are, without a Figure, Prisoners, Slaves, and Felons, under a State of Expiation and Purification. Our whole *Creation*, our intire *System*, in regard to our defaced and spoilt *Planet*, labours like Slaves at the Oar, is in *Travail*, in a perpetual *Fermentation* and *Effervescence* as a malignant Fever, working for a *Crise*, and delivery (ER, p. 26).

The final metaphor betrays the personal origins of Cheyne's sense of millennial crisis. We remember that Cheyne's spiritual reawakening came after a disorientating, near-fatal attack of fever, the result, he believed, of a 'fall' into the world of creaturely appetites. In the*Case of the Author,* he describes his mental condition during the breakdown as being that of a condemned felon. Fallen man is a fevered prisoner whose ultimate release lies in a 'great and violent *Crise*...an Universal Goal-Delivery' (ER pp. 26-7).

Cheyne's sense of immanent chiliastic fulfilment seems to have increased in the 1730s. He makes overtly millenarian statements in Discourses I, (pp. 26-8; pp. 39-

42), and V (pp. 212-25), and the account of our 'spiritual natures' in Discourse IV is also presented within a millennialist providential scheme. It is impossible to tell when Discourse V was penned, but allusion's to Bishop Browne's criticisms place at least some of it after 1732. As noted in Chapter 4, the most characteristic feature is Cheyne's reluctance to discuss specific dates. However, he is sure that the *Universal Restoration* will take place in finite time, although 'some are under this Operation a shorter, some a longer Time, according to wisdom and Designs of the Sovereign *Reason*, and the Mansion they are to fill in the New *Jerusalem'*. All at last will be purified, perhaps in a 'Universal *conflagration* (ER pp. 41-2). These images of violent disruption, or a 'Universal Good Delivery' are juxtaposed with more qualified accounts of a progressive rather than cataclysmic consummation. If Cheyne is unsure of the precise plan, he consistently endorses the heresy of Universal Salvation as it is to be found in Origen, and the contemporary writings of Leade, Lee, and Marsay. It has already been noted that in 1738-9, Cheyne was circulating Marsay's works amongst 'all those conversant with the universal salvation', naming Hartley, Lady Huntingdon and Law.[15] Universal Salvation was one of the unorthodox 'nostrums' to which Law objected when Cheyne revealed his plan for a translation of Marsay, but Cheyne did not decide to suppress the doctrine in his *Conjectures,* where he abandons his earlier reluctance to discuss the nature of the New Jerusalem.

This optimistic doctrine was a reaction against Calvinist notions of exclusive election. It has an egalitarian ring, but the rest of Cheyne's account of the 'Restoration' reveals that he supported a very rigid, hierarchic view of 'natural order' based upon complex Cabbalistic analogies derived from the Bible. A basic division exists between creatures of light (God), or creatures of love (Jesus). Every created being and even inanimate matter partakes of these two qualities in varying degrees of 'admixture and purification'. On the human level this is manifest in a basic division between active and passive persons:

> In all *Founders* of *Republics*, and *Civil societies*, in all *Law-Givers*, and *Philosophers*, in all *Apostolical* Men, in the *Inventors* of Arts and Sciences, even in the Broachers of Heresies, this Quality of *Light*, however coarse, turbid and confin'd seems to have been their *Passion*, their *Fort*, their *Characteristic*, and over-ruling *Byass [sic]*...in all the *Hermetical* Tribe, the *Solitaries*, the true contemplative *Philosophers*, the Founders of *Orders, Monasteries* and *Collegiat* Life, in true and zealous *Patriots*, and lovers of their Country and Species; in short, in all the contemplative and abstracted Persons, *Love* seems to be the predominant Affection(ER, p. 212).

---

15 Lady Huntingdon was to embrace a Calvinist-Methodism, but certainly David Hartley promoted the optimistic heresy of Universal Salvation in Observations on Man (1749), and William Law, overcoming his initial misgivings, also came close to publicly accepting the doctrine.

This creates an essential great '*Distinction* of Mankind' between 'those fitted by Nature to *command*, and those who are made only to be *commanded* and *obedient*' between the defenders of truth and those who attack error, between those law-givers who '*thrust* and hit the Mark best' and the politicians and honest statesmen who 'parry best' (ER, pp. 202-3). This providential ordering 'is founded on the different Parts they have acted in the generel *Lapse* of Mankind, and the different *Offices*, Seats and *Mansions* they are to be prepar'd for in the Universal Monarchy of the *Restoration*'.[16] 'The Elect' are to be 'the *Officers* and *Governors* of this *New Jerusalem*, this *political* future State, this universal *Restoration Monarchy* of the *Father of all*' (ER, pp. 221-2). The present probationary state will only continue whilst these future 'Officers, Governors and Magistrates' are prepared for their ultimate positions in the 'Kingdom of the Blessed', which is a more perfect version of the world we know: 'The New Jerusalem is liken'd to a City, a State, a Republic; it has its People, Subjects, and Officers; it has its *Temples. paradaisical Gardens*, Rivers of *Pleasures*, a *perpetual Spring*, and all our best and most *beautifying* Delights and material Comforts here'.

Although Cheyne's comments often remind us of late eighteenth-century millennialist statements (Blake's included), Cheyne was not an egalitarian or libertarian radical. Without further information and research, it is difficult to judge precisely how Cheyne's millennialist faith translated into allegiances to contemporary political groupings, but it seems to reflect his political conservatism; indeed it approaches the mystical-Jacobite ideology of many of his pietist associates, notably Lord Forbes of Pitsligo, who also subscribed to Salvationism and was in communication with Cheyne over promoting Marsay's doctrines when some of the above passages were being penned. Perhaps Cheyne's hopes for 'the Universal Monarchy of the *Restoration*' represents the displacement of youthful hopes of a return to a 'natural' political order onto hopes of a future state (ER p. 210). There are hints throughout Cheyne's 1738 obituary for Baillie of Jerviswood, that he had seen his friends amongst the Old Whigs who formed the Patriotic Opposition to Walpole, as the worldly embodiment of his Salvationist hopes. For example, he describes Baillie as having been 'the most zealous Patriot, the ablest Statesman, and the most incorrupt Minister...If Saintship were in Use amongst Us, he would have been made a Saint on Earth, as, I hope, he is now one in Heaven'.[17]

The *Magnum Opus* confirms that Cheyne's medical theory and practice was conceived within a millennial ethos. Physical ill̂health impedes the millennial process

---

[16] Incidentally, Cheyne argues (perhaps with twin sons of his friend the Earl of Marchmont in mind), that this accounts for the otherwise inexplicable differences that may arise in the characters of twins.
[17] Mullett, Letters, p. 40.

of spiritual recovery. Without due cultivation within its 'Flesh Prison' the human spirit sinks into 'mere living', as we see in 'Children, Ideots and perhaps Brutes'. Whenever the body is disordered, the 'Spiritual Faculties' act irregularly. The essential nature of the spirit never changes but it is constrained through being temporarily entrapped in bodies that are designed 'to commerciat and communicat' with other material beings (ER pp. 158-9). Although Cheyne continues to describe the body in iatro-mechanical terms the interaction of body on mind, and mind on body is reciprocal: 'The Bodily *Machine* disorder'd or spoil'd will sink, debase, blunt and confound the Operations of the *Spirit*; and the *Spirit* violently agitated, or too closely confin'd, will disturb the *Oeconomy* of the Bodily Functions' (ER p. 158). Chronical and nervous distempers illustrate this interdependence: 'the raveings, *Inclinations* and *Distractions* in the *first*, and the unaccountable *Terrors, Panics, Inconstancies*, Dispondence and *Cowardice* [ie. suicidal tendencies], of the last' (ER p. 166). The 'Last Perfection' of all created beings depends upon achieving a 'perfect Sanity and Harmony of both [bodies and spirits] united, in their respective order and rank'.

Cheyne's mature comments on mind-body and matter-spirit interaction are represented in Discourses I and IV where he insists upon the absolute difference between inert matter and a self-active spirit. All changes produced in passive bodies 'are from the *Energy* and Action of *spiritual Substances*...so that where Matter, Mechanism and its Powers and Laws end, their Spiritual Agency and Energy begin':

> I fear, that Sir *Isaac Newton's Spiritus quidam subtilissimus, Descarte's,* and *Leibnitz's Vortices, Hu gen's* and *Fatio's* infinitely rare, rapid, subtil matter, with the Qualities they must endow them to solve Appearances, (I mean only in animated Bodies, for in Inanimat it may be requir'd, nay some such Fluid seems necessary, I think), is, I fear, imaginary and without Foundation, from sufficient Experiment, or the Analogy of Nature; unless by their infinitely rare, rapid, subtil Matter, they mean real Spiritual Substance, or else the first Elements of Bodies; for Matter must be extended, divisible, *inert*, and gravitat, else it can be no longer matter; and when such immaterial, and, as it were self-moving Matter is granted, it will seperat us, but one step further from *spiritual* Substance and Agency; or the perpetual Influence of the *First Cause*, in whom all things *live, move and have their Being.* And, I fear, the whole supposition, how *mechanical* and adequate soever, to answer Appearances in all *animated* beings, and in all Accounts of it given by these Great men, has not that Simplicity and Beauty conspicuous in, and essential and necessary to, all the Works of God. (ER. pp. 148-9)

Matter can only be acted upon by a spirit's 'self-motive Energy'. Cheyne's motives in rejecting mechanism are obvious, but it is telling that in the end his argument is not based upon mathematics or analogy, but pure aesthetics.

In Discourse I, he argues that the functioning of 'an organized Animal Body' cannot be 'accounted for...by mere Mechanism, or the Laws of Motion which now obtain, without the Sagacity of and Agency of a primary, a self-existent Cause; nor can the Functions be continued without the Superintendence and Influence of a self-

moving, self-acting, secondary Agent, informing and acting continually on it' (p. 2). This obviously harks back to the Townshend case, and it has already been noted (Chapter 7), that Cheyne endorsed Porterfield's ideas on the 'extreme Tenuity of even an organiz'd and compounded nervous fibre' in the *Miscellaneous Observations* at the close of this text (ER, p. 305). But it is in Discourse IV where Cheyne returns to the arguments concerning animal spirits and the aether both of which he vehemently rejects. He prefers to describe the nerves more simply as 'infinitely delicat and mechanically adjusted membranous Tubes, Twists or Ropes' with a milky 'Pith' which receive impressions directly from the 'Self Motive Principle'. He cites the Dissertatio de structura et Motu Musculari (1738) of his friend and countryman, Dr Alexander Stuart, to support his thesis that no intermediate fluid need be postulated because the nerves communicate directly to the muscles 'by proper *harmonious Oscillations'* (p. 152). The surfaces of all 'Bodies and their Effluvia or Repelling Steams' communicate by

> certain justly proportion'd and commensurable *Undulations*, *Vibrations*, and *Tremors* to such *membranous Pipes*, which the Natural *Sagacity* of the Intelligent Principles knows by its own innate Powers, to indicat the Presence of such and such Bodies; in the same Manner as the *Governor* of a besieg'd Town, or the Several Ships of a *Fleet* understand what such a number of *Guns*, or such a Flag, import and signify! Thus Things are easy, intelligible and simple. We daily see and hear, what fine Pieces of *Music* a skillful *Musician* can fling off a well -tun'd Instrument, from the various Motions of his *Fingers* or *Voice* (p. 152).

Again Cheyne resorts to poetic figures and mixed metaphors to describe the mysterious interaction between matter and spirit, body and soul. Whilst there is truth in Roy Porter's arguments that Cheyne's adherence to Neo-Platonism absolved him from developing a coherent reciprocal theory of how the mind directly animates the body, it should be noted that by the late 1730s, Cheyne does begin to endorse more vitalist conceptions of this interaction. When Cheyne talks of 'the Soul's Energy', comparisons invite themselves with the work of pietist medical theorists on the continent, notably Georg Stahl. Although there is every chance that Cheyne was familiar with such developments, he never discusses Stahl, and he never abandons primarily mechanistic explanations in favour of a full-blown organicism.[18]

Cheyne's 'True Philosopher' is an almost Wordsworthian figure who acquires spiritual truths as progressively revealed memory. The 'Study of *Arts* and *Sciences*,

---

[18] Cheyne criticised Boerhaave's chemical explanations (Mullett, Letters, p. 87). Lester M. King notes Cheyne's similarities with Stahl in *Mirror of 18th Century Medicine*, p. 255-6. Two recent essays do not mention Cheyne but suggest points of comparison: Johanna Geyer Kordesch *Georg Ernst Stahl's Radical Pietist Medicine* and Andrew Cunningham *Medicine to Cure the Mind: Boerhaave's Medical System and why it was adopted in Edinburgh* in The Medical Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, 1990).

and all their Knowledge is but *Remembrance* and *Recollection*, opening Passages and *Appertures*, to admit more light into the *Prison*' (ER p. 175). Trapped within its 'heavy clay coverlet' the spirit 'can only see and hear as through a *Grate* or narrow *Chink*'. Cultivation of the mind and the body is a 'lapping, pruning, dressing and removeing Obstacles and Incumbrances' which prevent the bodily organs from recovering their original facility. The soul's original moral powers of justice, goodness, truth, or faith, hope and charity, ('not figuratively, but in Reality'), are hidden within the 'gross *Adamical* prison' (Ibid., p. 176). Consequently, when 'The Genius or Man of Fine Natural Parts, or Hero, or Philosopher', is ' *ingenious, fanciful, poetical'*, they must cultivate sound, refined, and delicate '*Organs* of the *Imagination*'. He reiterates his theory of a hierarchy of intellectual ability dependent upon physiological predisposition. The development of virtue and science is seriously impaired when 'luxury, Lechery, intemperance, Laziness, strong and Violent Passions, inclement and pestilential Air, bruises and Accidents' damage the nervous and arterial systems. Whilst restoration is largely the responsibility of the individual it begins at birth and depends partly upon the actions of others, such as parents and nurses.

Cheyne does pay some attention to the cultivation of the spirit. The 'True Philosopher' must practice a quietist act of passive 'recollection' by 'entering into his own heart, thinking, reflecting, remembering' by which he 'will continually acquire a Facility, Quickness and Penetration in Intellectual Operations'. Cheyne's personal and professional exposure to the mental torment resulting from disordered bodies resulted in a millenarian notion of ultimate sanity:

> A Sick and diseased Person seldom *perceives* truly, nor reasons justly; and a *viscious* Person never judges solidly...nor acts perfectly. I say nothing here of a possible *passive* State in advanced Christianity, that being above Philosophy or Conjecture, and perhaps the last scene of the drama of the Restored

Cheyne reveals the source of his methods in quietist notions of a 'passive' state of ultimate 'recollection', or 'stilling the senses'. The 'True Philosopher' does not retreat into unreason, but cultivates a refined harmony between body and mind.

'The Will' plays the part of a divine 'ruling passion' in Cheyne's scheme as a self motive principle which acts 'above and beyond Matter' and 'at a Distance, without the Intervention of a Material *Medium*, by its own *Energy'*. This is quite evident 'from *Instinct*, *Impulse*, *Sympathy* and *Antipathy*, Conscience, natural Affection...*Matter* only limits and modifies its Operations' (ER p. 178). Much of Cheyne's epistemology is derived directly from Locke, but he only nominally accepts the idea of the soul as a *Tabula Rasa*, and emphasises that beneath its 'planetary plaistering' it retains,

unblemished, its God-given faculties of living, understanding and willing 'like *Characters* and *Inscriptions* engrav'd in the Substance of *Brass* or *Marble*, and filled up with *Wax, Clay* or *Dirt*':

> Or like the Imperceptible *Ink*, which leaves no Trace on the White Paper, but shews itself when rubbed over with *Juice of Lemon*. Thus the immaterial *thinking* Substance is laid asleep, becomes thoughtless, and as it w ,ere *stupified*, a bare polish't *Plain*, and a Sheet of clean Paper, (its three natural Powers...are sunk in one of living only), a mere *Recipient* or *Continent*, and as it were (without Ridicule), a *dark Lanthorn*, in the Loins of the Parent, and as it comes first into the World (ER, p. 320)

In living, the 'Organs of Sensation, the Apertures of the Senses, and the *Sentient* and *instructive* Powers, are gradually set free, and the Dirt pick'd out of the Spiritual Substance'. The brain and the nerves thus develop their full capacities as the material 'Dirt' is rubbed away, 'whereby the *spiritual Substance* is set free directly to enjoy and use all its inbred Powers' (Ibid.). If we hear anticipations of the language of Blake in such passages, it is due to the common influence of a theosophical tradition which Cheyne's circle were instrumental in keeping alive. If Cheyne, unlike Blake, remained loyal to Locke and Newton in his call for a cleansing of 'the Doors of Perception', it was only through stretching their conceptions well beyond their original empirical boundaries. Witness his fanciful analogies between mental processes and Newtonian laws of motion and refraction:

> The Understanding is merely *passive*, it is like the *vis inertiae* of Matter and Reflection and Refraction in it, of which it is the analogous quality in the *Soul*; and this *vis inertiae* is one of the last Steps of the descending Miniature of the divine Original in this inanimat Creation. *Truth* is to the *Understanding*, what *Light* is in the animal Life to the *Eye*; it must be receiv'd absolutely, and only according to the then State of the *Mind*. It is the *Will* that is the ruling and directing Faculty of Spiritual Nature, and its analogous Quality in animated Matter, is *Attraction* and *Repulsion*; all depend on it; it rules absolutely, and without controul, even sometimes over the Understanding, and every Faculty of the *Soul*(ER pp. 177-8).

Until G. S. Rousseau's recent essay appeared, no modern scholar had adequately attempted to define Cheyne's religious ideas or relate them to contemporary aesthetic and literary trends. When E. R. Wasserman examined the evidence for T. S. Eliot's influential theory of an historical 'dissociation of sensibility' in 1953, he opened his survey of *The Divine Analogy in the Eighteenth Century* with Cheyne's theodicy, describing it as 'one of the most extravagant expressions of this sort of Platonic analogy'.[19] He rightly suggests that Cheyne used the 'Platonic ladder' to reconcile 'his many roles [as] Cusan Platonist...spiritual son of Paracelsus...and F.R.S'., but he neglects the numerous more contemporary sources for Cheyne's adherence to

---

19 Journal of English Literary History, 20 (Baltimore, 1953), pp. 39-76. Eliot sets out this theory in *Metaphysical Poets*, in Selected Essays (1932).

mystical analogy which put him at the influential heart of a living Enlightenment tradition. Wasserman's discussion is confined to the Philosophical Principles (1715), and takes no account of Cheyne's unrepentant moves towards an even more imaginative, distinctly proto-Romantic conception of analogy in the 1740 *Discourses*; Janus-like texts which look forward to Blake and Romanticism as much as they look backwards to Boehme and the Renaissance. His typical declaration that 'Cheyne was obviously an anachronism, for the Platonism he called upon to reconcile the new empiricism with the old theology was too mystical for those temperate days', demands qualification, if only in the light of Cheyne's obvious popularity amongst the *literati* (Wasserman himself introduces us to him as 'a friend of such literary figures as Pope, Richardson, Chesterfield, Fielding, Gay and Young') (p. 42). More recently, in a discussion of Sterne's engagement with analogy, Mark Loveridge has challenged Wassermann's account for greatly underestimating 'the degree to which the divine analogy was undermined from within, by being adopted and extensively used in associationism and other sciences which sought to use the "heritage of correspondencies" for their own ends. The energy with which the analogy was used in incongruous contexts was, in part, the reason for its discarding and discrediting'.[20] Perhaps we should grant Cheyne a more positive place within this tradition. Although there were many who mocked his 'whimsies', there were also many, like Chesterfield and Lyttelton, who found Cheyne's enthusiasms fascinating, and others like Law and the Wesleys for whom he was 'an Old Apostle' of deep spiritual insight. As G. S. Rousseau observes, it was the creation of 'a metaphysics that increasingly denied the basis of physics' which is 'precisely why Cheyne is so interesting, and why the *literati* were so attracted to him'.[21]

Although Latitudinarians like Browne could expose the illogicalities of Cheyne's 'modes' and 'cones' and scoff at his 'spiritual senses', it took the more rigo rous mind of Hume to unravel the philosophical ambiguities of the argument from analogy and, at least from a purely diachronic perspective, finally give the method its *coup de grace*. But from a more synchronic historical viewpoint, the triumph of rational scepticism was far from complete. Hume himself turned to sentiment as a basis for morality, and, as he explains in a letter, probably addressed to Cheyne, also

---

[20] Loveridge, Laurence Sterne and the Argument about Design (1982), p. 92. Loveridge cites Cheyne at p. 84 and p. 100.

[21] Rousseau remarks that 'the analogical frame of mind and the type of imagination stimulating it has been ignored for scientific thinkers from 1680-1780...here Cheyne is a natural candidate who ought to be included in the continuum of thinkers pronouncing about the natural world from Newton and Whiston to Priestly and Erasmus Darwin'. He also calls Cheyne, 'a harbinger of...Hartley' (*IDC*, pp. 117; 19f. 105).

considered the 'psychological' significance of the claims of French *inspirés*.[22] At mid-century the modern rationalism was manifestly failing to deter the many converts to sentimental pietism. As we have seen in the last chapter, the anonymous 'gentleman that had changed his classical taste for mystical' with whom John Byrom recorded conversing with in a coffee-house in 1737, was not unique.[23]

**Pope's 'Conversation with Angels'**

Bolingbroke's critical attitude to Cheyne's breakfast-time sermons, noted earlier, stemmed from deep-rooted philosophical differences between a deistical statesman and a mystical physician. Arbuthnot, Gay, Swift, (proven by his silence), and Pope found Cheyne fascinating and essentially well-meaning. The latter in particular saw much of Cheyne during the late 1730s, as a frequent guest of Ralph Allen, and he made attempts to keep to Cheyne's regimens. Even when read as irony, Pope's instruction that Ralph Allen should tell Cheyne 'if ever I change my religion it shall be to his, or to the Quakers, I am not determined which', it shows that the poet took a discerning interest in Cheyne's particular brand of mystical pietism. In this brief section consideration is given to Cheyne's friendship with Pope in what proved to be the closing years of both their lives.[24]

In 1737, after an enjoyable conversation with Cheyne at the Bath residence of their mutual friend, the Methodist patroness, Lady Cox, Pope later told Bethel that the Doctor was 'greatly edifyed with me for having left off Suppers, and upon me telling him that most of my Aquaintances had not only done so, but had not drunk out 3 dozen of wine in my house in a Twelvemonth, he blessed God, and said my Conversation was with Angels'.[25] Cheyne was being in part facetious in response to one of Pope's perennial claims that he had conquered his natural propensity for gluttony, but Cheyne's typically quaint comment should also be read in the wider context of his conception of millenarian medicine. It carries with it the force of his optimistic belief in human perfectibility. In The Natural Method he declares 'I say, I can, in true *Phylosophy,* conceive no Difference between an *Angel* appearing and acting in an human Form, and a real *Man,* either in nature or Kind, but only in

---

[22] In the famous autobiographical letter, probably addressed to Cheyne, Hume wrote in 1734, 'I have notic'd in the Writings of the French mystics, & in those of our Fanatics here, that, when they give a History of the situation of their Souls, they mention a coldness and Desertion of the Spirit, which frequently returns, & some of them, at the beginning, have been frequently tormented with it many years' (Hume, Letters, I, pp. 12-18).

[23] Byrom Remains, II, p. 101, discussed in Hoyles, Waning, p. 82.

[24] Pope, Corr, IV, p. 119.

[25] Ibid., IV, p. 85.

Degree: So that, to me, a *Man* is a diminutive *Angel* shut up in a Flesh Prison...'(p. 79). Pope probably read parts of Cheyne's *magnum opus* in manuscript: he certainly took a sympathetic interest in its fortunes. When told that Richardson had offered to undertake personal responsibility for publishing The Natural Method, Pope was genuinely pleased and he promised to translate some of the Psalms into verse on Cheyne's behalf for a 'universal Charity' (a project Cheyne claimed was actually begun). The poet delighted in Cheyne's company:

> He is so very a child in true Simplicity of Heart, that I love him; as He loves Don Quixote, for the Most Moral & Reasoning Madman in the world. For I maintain & I know it, that one may smile at Those one loves, nay esteems, & with no more Malice or Contempt, than one bears to an Amiable Schoolboy. He is, in the Scripture language, an 'Israelite in whom there is no Guile', or in Shakespeare's 'as foolish a good kind of Christian creature as one shall meet with'.[26]

The physician was one of the few people Pope could tolerate during his depressive periods of what proved to be terminal illhealth. They could wax nostalgic about departed friends—Arbuthnot and Gay—and the optimistic days of their youth in Queen Anne's London. Visually, the valetudinarian poet and physician must have made an odd pair: a Lilliputian and a Brobignagian with the common misfortune of being at the mercy of 'crazy' constitutions. Both had also found financial security, despite experiencing forms of social marginalization, the one as a Catholic, the other as a Scot.

Pope's eager reassurances that he was remaining temperate, suggests that, behind the raillery, there was a glimmer of genuine faith in Cheyne's optimistic, spiritual whimsies. Cheyne was not the only mystically-minded quietist amongst Pope's intimate circle of the 1730s. We have already noted that the historian Nathaniel Hooke, a Catholic childhood friend of the poet was a close associate of Cheyne's religious circle, translated Ramsay's works, and was a private student of the mystics. He is known to Pope scholars as the person who called in a priest to administer the last sacraments to the dying poet (reputedly, much to Bolingbroke's annoyance). During the 1730s, Hooke is frequently found at Bath in the company of his patrons Pope, Allen and Cheyne. Even though Ralph Allen is usually depicted as a worldly businessman, he had an affection for the Neo-Platonic writings of John Norris, whose books he carefully annotated.[27] With Cheyne, Hooke and later David Hartley as frequent guests, millenarian-medicine and mysticism were firmly on the agenda for conversation at Prior Park during the period of Pope's visits in the late 1730s.

---

[26] Pope, Corr, IV, p. 208.

[27] Boyce, p. 63.

Elsewhere on his peregrinations, amongst the Baillies and Marchmonts at Oxford, London, and Ealing (the circle of 'Young Patriots' for whom Pope became a mentor in his closing years), Pope would find many other Cheyne 'Disciples', in constant communication with their 'Old Apostle'.[28]

During this period, Pope was engaged upon the rewriting and additions for The New Dunciad (1742), which on one occasion he called his 'Widecombe Poem', after the house Allen occupied on Bath Downs during the building of Prior Park. [29] With its pervasive apocalyptic atmosphere, one wonders how much this work owes to Pope's familiarity with Cheyne's Universal Salvationist vision of 'True Philosophers' taking their elected places amongst the 'Governors and the Governed' in the 'Universal Monarchy of the Restoration'. Pope's parodic use of millennialist and Pythagorean imagery in The New Dunciad suggests a personal ambivalence towards Cheyne's optimistic millenarianism. Maynard Mack talks of the poem harbouring 'a more universal theme with distinct tragic undertones', with 'its evocation of world's end at the close' constituting' only the most recent contribution to the long succession of visions of apocalypse by poet, prophet, sage, and seer - all, like Cassandra, condemned not to be believed'.[30] Mack recalls the anecdote that Pope's voice trembled when he read the closing lines.

Whilst Pope was writing this burlesque apocalyptic vision, he was intimate with a man who had an implicit faith and deep scholarly interest in the millennium; a man who encouraged the poet to adopt a physical regimen designed to release the intelligent, creative spirit and encourage 'conversation with angels'; a man who felt he was something of a prophet throwing his 'pearls before swine'. Cheyne shared Pope's vision of an age fallen into corruption. In his 1737 obituary to their mutual friend Baillie of Jerviswood, Cheyne wrote an encomium on the elder statesman's unremitting 'Humanity, Benevolence, Christian Fortitude, Perseverance and Universal Charity', in the light of 'the present Degeneracy and lapse of Human Nature, the present deep Corruption of the Age and this nation [and] the present Condition and

---

28 Very shortly before Cheyne's death, a terminally ill Pope wrote genially to Allen: 'I assure you all ones great Friends and great Philosophers put together, are not half so great a Comfort as one good Woman, in these circumstances; and so tell Dr Cheyne, and Dr Hartly [sic] too if you so please, for I think neither of them will be angry at this; tho' many Doctors would, who have the Vanity to think themselves Better as well as wiser than Women' (Corr, IV, p. 449). Cheyne may not have received this message, for just over a week later when Hartley was called from Prior Park to attend him on his deathbed, Cheyne was already too weak to recognise his colleague.

29 Pope, Corr., IV, p. 387.

30 Mack, Pope, p. 783.

Law of Mortality'.[31] It was Cheyne's enthusiastic faith in an inevitable, almost mechanical Universal salvation which set him apart from the Scriblerians.

In The New Dunciad, we detect Pope inverting Cheyne's optimistic vision of a 'Universal Restoration' or 'Cure', and creating in its place a vision of 'Universal Decline' or 'Disease' (both physical and mental). Where Cheyne turned heavenward to celestial mansions and saw the 'Elect', the poets, patriotic statesmen, philosophers (of purified, unsullied sensibilities), gathering in their ethereal hosts ready to take their allotted places as the 'Governers and the Governed' of the New Jerusalem, Pope looked down the Thames to the Hanoverian capital, and saw a chaos of Bedlamites, dunces, and fools. In a sense Pope simply emphasises one side of Cheyne's equation; that the world as we see it is sunk into discord and ruled by the vicious blind victims of ungodly desires. Although Pope was amused by Cheyne's enthusiastic zeal for all-explanatory, metaphysical flights of fancy, this table talk of the transmigration of souls, 'adamical dungeons', 'flesh prisons', 'spiritual hierarchies, and 'Universal Restoration' surely fired the poet's satirical imagination, as similar Neo-Platonic and Hermetic notions had done earlier during the composition of The Rape of the Lock.[32] This metaphysical machinery of Cheyne's millenarian obsessions undoubtedly suggested to Pope a rich source of symbolism. What Cheyne made of Pope's vision of Dullness is not extant, but when he heard that 'Pope is to beat Cibber in an Addition to his Dunciad', he urged Richardson to send him a copy 'with the first'.[33]

## The most Moral and Reasoning Madman in the World'

> 'Good nature is Quixotism'
> (Henry Fielding, *The Coffee-House Politician* [1730])

By the 1730s, Cheyne is often found half-apologising for his obvious enthusiasms in an attempt to maintain his creed within a frequently hostile world of commercial interest and libertine social satire. He had to anxiously define his readership, littering his prefaces with defensive remarks, dismissing his opponents at the same time as flattering his 'Disciples'. In his 1740 Preface, he anticipated two groups to whom his work would appear 'obnoxious': 'the Licentious, Unguarded, Spurious, Free-Thinkers...who will honour me with Enthusiasm, Romanceing, and Castle Building without any Solid Foundation', and 'the Stiff, Rigid and Precise' will find his spiritual sentiments 'dangerous and presumptuous', that he thinks himself 'wise above what is

---

[31] Mullett, Letters, p. 41.

[32] Space forbids more detailed critical analysis but, for example, Pope parodies Cheyne's gravitational conception of spiritual re-union in Book IV, and the notion of transmigration, in Book III, lls. 43-54.

[33] Mullett, Letters, LXXVIII (1742).

written...arrogantly prying into Secrets of Infinite Wisdom'. It was noted in Chapter 4 that in An Essay on Regimen Cheyne argues that the fear of being labelled an *Enthusiast* has done much to damage the progress of spiritual knowledge. Here it will be argued that in Cheyne's increasingly defiant declaration of his spiritual *Enthusiasms* at the close of his life he was to invoke a number of related concepts of simplicity, innocence and amiability which became intrinsic to the cult of sensibility.

Accusations of insanity came easily to the pens of Cheyne's professional enemies. Indeed, in popular rhetoric 'enthusiasm' and 'madness' were often synonymous.[34] We can identify two related strategies in Cheyne's response to such charges. One is to simply turn the same rhetoric against his opponents, insisting that he has 'always thought spurious Free-Thinkers, Active-Latitudinarians, and Apostolic-Infidels...under some obstinat bodily Distemper, and much more proper subjects for medicin then Argument' (ER, p. xvi). This is similar to the tactics adopted by the Scriblerians, most notably in The Dunciad, where the whole nation is portrayed succumbing to various forms of social madness, exemplified by 'Dullness', a type of 'idiotism'. Though Cheyne is more hopeful of cure he was merely lending 'scientific' credence to a commonplace of contemporary controversial discourse. A more particular response appears within the same 1740 preface, where he argues that happiness depends upon recovering purity of heart and life: 'it is more difficult than perhaps most Men are aware of, to determin, with any Degree of Exactness, the Limits that separat Wisdom from Folly, Wrong-Headedness from Intellectual Sanity; the most perfect Man here has a Mixture of both: *Optimus ille, qui minimis ungetur'* (p. xii). This invokes the important Christian tradition of 'holy-madness' and 'wise-foolishness'.

Cheyne was certainly aware of the reiteration of this notion in Burton. He probably knew the *locus classicus* of this tradition, Erasmus's Praise of Folly (1511), which both exploits its ironic, satirical potential at the same time as surveying both the Classical (esp. Lucianic and Democritan), and Scriptural (specifically Pauline), sources of the concept.[35] Closely allied to Cheyne's adoption of an idea of 'holy folly', is a positive concept of childlike innocence. In his mature writings he sought to write with a child-like 'Simplicity', like one who had never 'look'd...into a *Physical* Book before' (EM, p. 362). The concern with elderly valetudinarians which dominates Cheyne's late medical writings was a natural progression from his earlier interest in

---

34 The autobiographical *Case of the Author* was deliberately included in The English Malady to put a stop to charges of insanity, although Cheyne privately told Richardson that he had indeed been temporarily driven mad.

35 Erasmus Praise of Folly, translated by Betty Radice (1971) passim; but especially Sect. 39 (p. 123). For Origen and other sources, M. Screech Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly (1980).

education. Believing that nervous weakness in old age is frequently providential punishment for youthful sensuality, Cheyne's *Magnum Opus* is in part a secular guide to 'Holy Living and Holy Dying'. In the Preface to An Essay on Regimen, he explains that the valetudinarian is in a very special position in relation to God being 'placed by his low Health, in the Middle-State, between both Worlds, the old and the new, must unavoidably, at some times, figure to himself some sort of Map of the Next World'. Cheyne saw childhood and old age as complementary periods of idleness due to freedom from the social responsibilities of the adult world. Like those of children, the valetudinarians mind may become empty of rational ideas and free to wander. For Cheyne this mental vacuity was both a condition of vulnerability and strength. There was an inherent psychological danger of morbid introspection producing melancholia which must be combated, but there was also the potential for spiritual enlightenment that must be exploited.[36]

To combat mental vacuity, Cheyne advocated the adoption of 'hobby-horses' or 'light Amusements', the traditional 'occupational' cure for melancholia or hypochondria. He told Samuel Richardson:

> After the Affairs of indispensable Duty are ended, a Hobby-Horse or Pastime is like Food to the Body...I wish I could get you a proper one, for it is not a Pastime unless it amuses our particular Taste. I think a Totum or Draughts or Bowls or Shuttlecock or any sort of Amusement that has Execise joined with it in Day Light and Fair Weather.[37]

Elsewhere he suggests domestic card games and reading for mental relaxation. In the Preface to An Essay on Regimen, adopting Burton's apologetics, Cheyne also suggests that suitably amiable philosophical writings can also provide such distraction:

> Since Old Men, and Valetudinarians especially become, as it were, Children a second time and, in their Second Childhood, those must have their Rattles as well as these; I thought it safer, as I am sure it is much more entertaining, to play with Ideas, Philosophic Conjectures, and such Amusements, how weakly soever founded, as to tend to make Virtue and its source amiable, justify the Conduct of Providence, and mend and rejoice the Heart without hurting the Head, than to dwell on the dark Side of Things, that leads to Pyrrhonism, Fatalism, Infidelity and Despair (ER, p. iv).

The *Discourses* in Part II of this work were, we recall, originally going to be published under the title 'Philosophical Amusements'. To Richardson, Cheyne

---

36 As noted in Chapter 7, Samuel Johnson, whose fear of idleness became pathological, adopted some of Cheyne's 'Newtonian' vocabulary of mental vacuity; see C. H. Hinnant, Samuel Johnson (1988), pp. 12-14; 27 and 133-5.

37 Mullett, Letters, LXIX, p. 107-9. Richardson subsequently took up Bowls, much to Cheyne's approval, for 'it has done Mr Allen more Service than any Thing, except his Diet, and indeed fits all Ages, Conditions, and Tempers'.

ingenuously justified his vain attempts to publish as the whim of an idle old man for whom philosophical writing was merely a harmless 'Hobby-Horse'. He defended his philosophical speculations as at the very least harmless playthings which fill up a gap in what he knew to be an expanding literary market which would be otherwise filled up by works of infidelity. He thought that even if his 'rude and unfinish'd sketch' of spiritual nature was thought 'an imaginary and enthusiastical romance', then at least it was just an innocent 'Fable' (ER, p. 51).

Cheyne's promotion of innocent 'Hobby-Horses' reminds us forcibly of the valetudinarian Sterne, who like Cheyne read as many works on melancholia and nervous illness as he could lay his hands on, including The English Malady. In this context, Roy Porter has noted that Uncle Toby's 'cure', as depicted in Volume I of Tristram Shandy (1759-67) 'is a text-book case of psycho-therapeutics'.[38] Sterne probably also owned An Essay and Regimen with its introductory remarks on philosophical 'Rattles' for valetudinarians and its fanciful accounts of generation, 'seminal academical dungeons' and 'flesh-prisons'. Cheyne's defence of whimsical philosophical studies as a harmless plaything of the aged again seems to have informed Sterne's sympathetic portrait of Walter Shandy.[39] As Porter notes, for Cheyne and Sterne, both the production and consumption of writing can be a therapeutic activity for those of sensibility. Or, as Sterne declares of his novel: 'If 'tis written against any thing,—'tis wrote, an' please your worships, against the spleen'.[40]

In the Preface to the Essay on Regimen, Cheyne anticipates Sterne's adoption of related Burtonian and Erasmian traditions of innocent play, and wise or holy folly, within a more contemporary sentimental discourse of pious nervous sensibility and benevolence. Alongside his defense of innocent philosophical 'Rattles', Cheyne makes another confessional outburst:

> I had much rather have the weaker, than the stronger System of Nerves within the Extremes. I had rather be happy in a Dream, than miserable awake. In a word, I had rather choose to be an innocent, benevolent, tho' weaker and more credulous Person, than a malicious, critical, spurious Free-Thinker, even with regard to this life only (pp. xii-xiii).

As an early manifesto of a persona soon to be dubbed 'the Man of Feeling', this statement registers a significant shift in eighteenth-century attitudes towards notions of masculinity and 'humour', in which Cheyne plays an ambivalent role as both

---

38 Catalogue of Laurence Sterne's Library ed. by Charles Whibley (1930). Porter quotes from The English Malady on 'hobby-horses', as 'one of the most widely read discussions of melancholy of the period' by 'the most acclaimed "nervous" doctor of the age...an author Sterne certainly read'. Porter, *Against the Spleen* in Laurence Sterne ed. by V. G. Myer (1984), p. 93.

39 Tristram Shandy, esp. Vols. I, Chapters 98-101 and II, Chapter I.

40 Ibid., Vol., IV, Ch. 32.

theorist and exemplar. It looks forward to Sterne's cry: 'Praised be God for my Sensibility !...Though it has often made me wretched, yet I could not exchange it for all the pleasures the greatest sensualist ever'.[41] Cheyne's preference for innocent dreams over depressingly sceptical *facts* echoes Erasmus, and answers Folly's rhetorical question: 'What difference is there, do you think between those in Plato's cave who can only marvel at shadows and images of various objects, provided they are content and don't know what they miss and the philosopher who has emerged from the cave and sees the real things ?' In his youth, Cheyne had experienced the melancholy fate of those who, believing themselves emerging into philosophical light, have found only the melancholy despair of scepticism or the ravings of false-inspiration. In old age he preferred to stay innocently dreaming away in the Platonic cave.

Ironic self-promotion as a harmless, *Enthusiast* was an essential element in the Cheyne cult, as he paraded his conversion from ambitious glutton to apostle of temperance, from vitriolic controversialist to genial healer, from calculating mathematician to pious man of feeling. This complex persona managed to reconcile what at first may seem like the ambiguous roles of fashionable Georgian physician and mystic. Perhaps a little incongruously, one of Cheyne's principal weapons in his defence of practical pietism and mystical speculation was his often ironic wit. His exchanges with, for example, Beau Nash, reveal an ability to defend his moral high ground by countering wit with wit, as Cheyne exploited what many orthodox Christians saw as the devious mode of discourse favoured by deists and freethinkers. The contemporary climate is appropriately illustrated in one of John Byrom's letters to his wife, sent from 'our great C[offee] House' in London on 18 February, 1729, in which he complains at not having had the opportunity to read William Law's newly published Serious Call, because of 'trotting about from place to place'.[42] The young people of Byrom's acquaintance think Law 'an impracticable, strange, whimsical writer' (all epithets applied to Cheyne in the satires):

> Mr Law, and Christian religion, and such things, they are mightily out of fashion at present; indeed I do not wonder at it, for it is a plain, calm, business, and here people are, and love to be, all of a hurry, and to talk their philosophy, their vain philosophy, in which they agree with one another in nothing but rejecting many received opinions; their arguments all centre chiefly in this, that Christianity being now established, another kind of conduct is proper from that which might be required at its first appearance; to which I answer, that indeed they have established a nominal Christianity and forsaken the practical Christianity, that—but I cannot talk of Christianity in a coffeehouse, another time and place...will do better. How do you do...Mr Club, Mrs Assembly etc. (Talon, p. 105).

---

41 Sterne, Letters, p. 396.

42 Talon, p. 105.

Like his pietist friends Law and Byrom, Cheyne set himself against this pressure of infidelity. He too offered a 'practical Christianity' in opposition to the 'nominal Christianity' of what he told Lyttelton and the Scriblerians were 'Gluttonous' pretences to philosophy. As one of the age's greatest opponents of idle 'Luxury', Cheyne shared a dislike for Byrom's facetiously named 'Mr Club' and 'Mrs Assembly'. But, unlike the squeamish Byrom, Cheyne (as Law himself reminds Byrom just after Cheyne's death), 'was always talking in coffeehouses about naked faith and pure love'.[43]

A hitherto unrecorded anecdote from the diary of John Dyer, the Bristol pietist, bears witness to Cheyne's coffee house habits:

> Dr Cheyne... once sat at a Coffee House...happen'd to be seated near 2 infidel Gentleman who were disputing about forms of prayer. He interrupted them saying to this effect, 'Gentlemen, permit me to prescribe a form for you, it is this—"Oh God if there is a God have mercy on my Soul, if I have a Soul"', this nonpluss'd the disputants, who thereon ended their contest.[44]

With the zeal of a convert, when his health allowed, Cheyne took his quietist doctrines into the coffee houses, confronting the enemy head-on, (although for lunch he may have kept to radishes and spa water). His ability, between bouts of illhealth, to return to his former sociability, revived and ensured Cheyne's success. As his books, correspondence, and biographical anecdotes all testify, Cheyne did not abandon his native wit and become a reclusive mystic who pored over arcane texts. He remained a sociable public figure famous for his metaphysical and sentimental enthusiasms, and genial banter. Consequently, one anonymous devotee in her elegiac *Verses Written by a Lady on the much Lamented Death of Her Physician*, mourns over the loss of Cheyne's therapeutic voice and atoning smile, and celebrates his ability to be 'Social, in Science, and, with Deepness, Gay!'. *

Cheyne's humour was essential to his self-cultivated persona as a 'man of feeling'. As Stuart Tave has illustrated, popular, literary concepts of the comic underwent a marked change during 'the long eighteenth-century', with Restoration wit, raillery, and acerbic satire giving way to notions of benevolent good humour: what Tave terms 'amiable humour'.[45] Cheyne's career exemplifies this transition in several respects. His publishing career began with his authorship of two vitriolic pamphlets in defence of Pitcairne The two major theoretical works cited by Tave in support of his thesis,

---

[43] Talon, p. 221. Of Byrom, it should be added that elsewhere his literary 'Remains' show him to have been infinitely 'clubbable', also managing to combine mystical studies with conviviality.

[44] *Diary of John Dyer*, 1752, I, p. 20 (BCL).

[45] Stuart M. Tave, The Amiable Humorist: a Study in the Comic Theory and Criticism of the early Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries (Chicago, 1960), Preface (and passim).

* Mullett, pg. 127.

namely Francis Hutcheson's Reflections on Laughter (1746), and James Beattie's Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition (1776), both cite anecdotes of Pitcairne's cruel wit as examples of an outmoded style. The pious convert, Cheyne adopted politer literary manners with prefatorial recantations of his former ungentlemanly and un-Christian behaviour. His mature disapproval of personal satire is recorded by his patient, Hugh Chamberlain, in a preface to his Characters at the Hot-Well, Bristol (1724) (dedicated to Richard Nash), which contains explicit lampoons of specific members of the Court:

> To indulge a vein of Humour after this manner in private, on such an ocassion, and in mix'd company as compose the usual resort of Wells, may be thought well enough, and pass'd over as a common Amusement: but to write and publish peoples Characters with their Names, and that of Great Rank and Figure too, while they are Living, seems to be a serious matter; especially when as in the present case there must be allow'd an air of Freedom and Likeness to run through the whole, as much as if one was writing of their Great Grandfathers. '*What Maan*' (said a worthy friend to me when I show'd him the Book'—you may know his country by his Dialect* [* Dr Ch-- ne at the Bath], '*do'st thou dare to write People's Chauracters while they are Living ?*' (p. xxx).

This disapproval was in keeping with the stance attributed to Arbuthnot in Pope's famous poetic Epistle (1733), a poem Cheyne quotes from approvingly in his letters. Just as Pitcairne exemplified an older mode of humour for literary theorists of the mid to late-eighteenth century, Tave cites Cheyne as an early example of the emergent, benevolent or 'amiable' style. In this context he quotes Pope's affectionate sketch of the Quixotic Cheyne as 'the Most Moral and Reasoning Madman'. Tave notes that Pope's comment 'foreshadowed later developments...and, of course, the affection for Don Quixote is twice removed: Pope loves Cheyne, who, himself a Quixote, loves Quixote' (p. 155). Cheyne's role as the inspiration for this innovatory concept of Don Quixote suggests an important context within which to view the Doctor's own career, which, perhaps more than Tave realised, illustrates this significant shift in comic values. Cheyne was not only a self-promoter of a positive notion of innocent eccentricity but posthumously, he came to be viewed as an authentic example of the type of amiably sincere, humorist being promoted in popular fiction. We therefore see an almost ironic element of reciprocation in later descriptions of Cheyne as a genuine *Quixotic*, *Falstaffian*, *Smollettian*, or *Sternian* 'original'. Cheyne's own sophisticated response to Don Quixote is particularly pertinent since attitudes to Cervantes' comic creation noticeably changed around the time of Cheyne's death.

Henry Fielding was the first to publicly promote Quixote sympathetically as a 'moral and reasoning madman', in two plays of the early 1730s: namely The Coffee-House Politician (1730), and Don Quixote in England (1733). In the latter, as Tave

notes, Quixote represents the madness of all mankind and this 'appearance of Don Quixote as the author's favourite and mouthpiece, a righteous figure in a world of rascals, was something quite new' (p. 157). Whether or not Cheyne's own attitude to the Don was coloured by familiarity with these plays, he would certainly have understood Fielding's Quixote when he declares 'Sancho, let them call me mad: I'm not mad enough to court their approbation' which neatly encapsulates Cheyne's attitude to his critics. Fielding's most influential portrait of the Quixotic 'amiable humorist' was Parson Adams in Joseph Andrews (1742). When an eager Cheyne urged Richardson to procure him an advance 'trade' copy of Joseph Andrews, he described it as being written 'in Ridicule of your Pamela and of Virtue in the Notion of Don Quixote's Manner'. Cheyne reassured Richardson that Joseph Andrews was a 'wretched Performance', which would serve to 'entertain none but Porters or Watermen'. He was deliberately flattering both Richardson and his delicate constitution but one is tempted to think Cheyne's animosity may also have been the unconscious result of too many similarities between himself and Parson Adams.[46] Joseph Andrews provided the model for Richard Graves's The Spiritual Quixote (1773), where, as noted earlier, Cheyne's medico-philosophy was portrayed as an example of well-meaning, but whimsical quixotism.[47] In Cheyne's career as a 'moral and reasoning madman' we finally witness *Enthusiasm* being subjected to Georgian domestication.

---

46 Mullet Letters, LV, p. 85 and LVI, p. 88. Whilst it would be convenient for my argument to misquote Pope, as G. S. Rousseau does, and have him describe Cheyne as 'a kind of living Parson Adams, in Scripture language, *An Israelite in whom there is no guile...*'(*IDC*, p. 83).Unfortunately I can find no authentic contemporary comparisons between Cheyne and Fielding's comic creation.

47 Indeed the shift in tone from the more satirical early chapters to the more amiable later ones suggests that Graves himself became more of an 'amiable humorist' during the actual (long) process of composition.

# 10

# CHEYNE AND SAMUEL RICHARDSON

## Introduction: Richardson's 'Religious Physician'

We know more concerning Cheyne's relationship with Samuel Richardson than any of the Doctor's other literary friendships.[1] Richardson's professional assistance as Cheyne's printer and literary agent was partly undertaken out of a sense of obligation to Cheyne for his liberal concern for the novelist's precarious health. Besides the publication of the *Magnum Opus,* Richardson and Cheyne were mutually engaged in a number of significant literary projects during the 1730s. An intimacy developed as Richardson became a follower of Cheyne's medical doctrines and a close associate of fellow pietists. Unsuspecting that Richardson had original literary talent, Cheyne was also a surprised admirer of Pamela, and offered detailed critical advice on a sequel.[2] Whilst there has been a welcome feminist re-evaluation of the canon relating to the eighteenth-century novel, this has done nothing to diminish interest in Richardson's prose fiction and its central importance for the study of the cult of sensibility. As G. S. Rousseau has illustrated, many of Richardson's contemporaries equated his ability to delineate the most delicate nuances of sentimental feeling with his own 'nervous sensibility' in a direct correlation between literary genius and physiological make-up.[3] Such comments were founded upon a number of assumptions concerning the moral and creative superiority of nervous sensibility that were being given 'scientific' credence in medical texts like The English Malady. It has thus become commonplace for accounts of Richardson to note the biographical connection between the novelist and his physician.[4] Whilst Prof. Rousseau's most recent work on Cheyne emphasises

---

[1] Over eighty of Cheyne's letters to the novelist dating from the early 1730s until 1743 were copied at Richardson's instruction into a bound notebook, now in Edinburgh University Library (Laing MSS III, 356). Ed. and published by C. F. Mullett as The Letters of George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson (Missouri, 1942), they are cited according to Mullett's numbering (in roman), and page number. The place of posting is usually Bath, rarely Bristol. Dates are only given in full when relevant.

[2] Carroll, Selected Letters: pp. 46-51, also Richardson to Stephen Duck, Ibid., pp. 54-55. The only other extant letter to Cheyne from Richardson (21 January, 1743), discusses Pope and personal satire, Ibid., pp. 56-58.

[3] Rousseau, *Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres*, pp. 137-157; p. 153. He quotes Mrs Delany's comments in Barbauld, Letters, IV, p. 30.

[4] Rousseau observes that it was from Cheyne that Richardson 'learned so much about his perverse bodily constitution' (*Nerves, Spirits*, p. 137). Janet Todd acknowledges Richardson's debt to The English Malady, for his understanding of the physiological mechanisms underlying the various nervous

the religious aspect of his career, the significance of Cheyne's sentimental pietism for Richardson studies remains relatively unexplored.

Cheyne offered Richardson more than merely a physiological explanation of the wayward actions of his nerves. In the books Richardson printed for Cheyne and in the physician's private advice, concepts of nervous sensibility and spirituality are intimately linked within broader religious and metaphysical concepts of both divine and human nature. Cheyne's brand of pietism provides a significant context within which to read Richardson's prose fiction, where the delicacy of his heroine's nerves denotes refined spiritual sensibilities, which in turn support a radically conservative individualism. This is seen particularly in Clarissa Harlowe (1747-8), where, through all the heroine's experiences of social and sexual violation, temporary madness, physical imprisonment, ritualistic ascetic purification and mortifying illness, her nervous sensibility emerges triumphant as the means to spiritual transcendence. As already noted, Rosemary Bechler, alerted to Richardson's place amongst a pre-Methodist circle of pietists, has offered a challenging 'Behmenist' reading of Clarissa. She relates the novel to a number of other publishing projects which engaged Richardson during the 1740s and 1750s, which all reflect his contact with Cheyne's pietist associates.[5] Bechler acknowledges that Cheyne's 'Philosophical Medicine', was an important element in Richardson's exposure to this tradition but she does not explore their relationship. On the whole the biographical connection between Cheyne and the pioneer of the psychological novel remains surprisingly unexamined.

Cheyne's correspondence with Richardson is perhaps the most interesting surviving record of the relations between a Georgian physician and his 'nervous' patient. Three principal topics emerge. Firstly, the publishing of Cheyne's *Magnum Opus* as already discussed; secondly the diagnosis and treatment of Richardson's nervous illness; and lastly, related personal exchanges of a literary or topical nature of general biographical significance. Below, it will be argued that both Cheyne and Richardson saw an intimate connection between health (both physical and mental), religious piety, public morality, and the purpose, consumption, and creation of literature.

Cheyne's letters provide a particularly important source of information regarding Richardson's activities during the 1730s, an otherwise poorly documented period of his career. His biographers, Eaves and Kimpel, use this material liberally but within

---

'fitts', 'hysterics' and 'vapours' which beset his fictional heroines. John Mullan makes similar remarks in Sentiment and Sociability.

[5] R. Bechler, *"Triall by what is Contrary"* Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence (1986). Although Clarissa began to appear in 1747, the earliest draft seems to have been written during 1744 within a year of Cheyne's death, when Richardson still adhered to Cheyne's Regimen.

such an extensive study their analysis of Cheyne's contact with Richardson is necessarily perfunctory and they fail to penetrate behind the caricature of Cheyne as merely a medical 'crank': 'in his letters Cheyne sounds like an improbable comic character in a Smollett novel, violent, hasty, kindly, and deeply religious, in a particular way of his own, as he was everything'(p. 63). Whilst this is an excellent vignette of certain prominent aspects of Cheyne's forceful personality, its reductive, mocking tone informs all their subsequent account. No one could deny the humorous aspects of Cheyne's character, but taking an exclusively anecdotal approach leads to an anachronistic misconception of his influence.[6] Whatever one may think about the merits of Cheyne's doctrines, the fact remains that Richardson was exposed to them for many years, encouraged their publication, and trusted Cheyne's directions enough to suffer the ridicule of becoming a vegetarian: a practice he continued, despite the death of Cheyne in the interim, for at least seven years.[7]

**A 'Brother Hyp'**

We do not know precisely when Cheyne and Richardson first became acquainted.[8] By the mid-1730s, the physician and novelist had several mutual associates such as James Leake, Ralph Allen, Dr John Heylyn, Samuel Chandler and Thomas Wilson, who cemented their private connections. The Richardson correspondence is more intimate and less formally deferential than that with Lady Huntingdon.[9] We should remember that when they became friends, Richardson, a fifty year old master-printer was by his own admission 'the most obscure man in Great Britain' whereas Cheyne, twenty years older, was a famous physician, and popular author with intimate friends

---

6 Sale (pp. 157-60) also denigrates Cheyne through accumulated references to unreadability, whimsicality, etc. Richardson's loyalty to Cheyne as an 'original' is in keeping with Jonathan Lamb's recent remarks on the novelist's attitude to originality, especially in Clarissa. See Lamb, *The Fragmentation of Originals in 'Clarissa'*, Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900, Vol. 28 (Summer, 1988), 3, pp. 443-459; esp. pp. 443-4.

7 Eaves & Kimpel, Samuel Richardson p. 156. The epithet is Richardson's description of Cheyne in a note he added to a draft reply (Carroll, p. 58).

8 The earliest dated letter of December 21, 1734, is preceded by one other which probably belongs to 1732-3 as it appears to refer to Richardson's involvement in the printing of The English Malady. Both Mullett (p. 31), and Sale (p. 157), agree with this assessment, but Eaves and Kimpel (p. 623), suggest it refers to the printing of a later work in 1739-42. In the undated letter, Cheyne refers to being told that Richardson's constitution 'is disposed to Rotundity and Liquor. I believe this indicates an early dating because by 1739 Cheyne would not have had to be told about the nature of Richardson's constitution.

9 Noted in Mullett, Letters, pp. 17-18.

at Court.[10] Cheyne admired Richardson as an exemplar of bourgeois virtues: 'I am convinced you are a Man of Probity and Worth, beyond what I have met with among Tradesmen. There is no Doubt there are many worthy Persons of that Class, but it has been my Misfortune to meet with but few that have Parts and Probity'(VIII, p. 36). This remark betrays an inherent sense of social superiority in the physician who laid claim to the arms of Essilmont. As we shall see this is not the only time we catch Cheyne exploiting his patient's obvious susceptibility to social flattery.

In December 1734, Cheyne was sorry to hear that 'great Business and close Application sinks your spirits often' and looked forward to seeing Richardson again at Bath: 'did I and you converse but honestly and freely one month again, without participation or Example of your Brother in law, I should make you as much more alive and active, and gay than I am myself'(II, pp. 31-32). Richardson periodically suffered from a number of nervous symptoms ranging from 'Startings, Twitchings and Cramps' to 'Catchings, Lowness and Terrors'.[11] Cheyne believed that he had been born with delicate nerves but this undetected constitutional weakness had only begun to undermine his health after years of sedentary work (LXVII, p. 104). The physician's task was partly one of offering a convincing and reassuring account of Richardson's illness, emphasising that he was not apoplectic but merely hypochondriacal, 'a brother Hyp', capable of benefiting from entering into a suitable regimen of dieting, exercise, and vomits: 'All your Complaints are vapourish and nervous, of no Manner of Danger, but extremely frightful and lowering (XXIX, p. 54). In short Richardson was a classic victim of 'the English Malady'.[12]

Cheyne played upon Richardson's vulnerability to flattery by constantly reminding him that his nervous disorders were the outcome of close study by someone from 'the Thinking Part of Mankind' (XXXVII, p. 61). Coming from a scholar of Cheyne's standing, such remarks could not have failed to appeal to the vanity of a largely self-educated tradesman. Richardson's literary adviser, the playwright and poet, Aaron Hill, who also suffered from bouts of nervous illness complained that, 'what...[Cheyne] says of amusements and exercise would be, doubtless, a very great help; but, since it is not so consistent as were to be wished

---

10 Richard Graves reported hearing Richardson boast at Prior Park in 1752 that, 'twenty years ago I was the most obscure man in Great Britain, and now I am admitted to the company of the first characters of Britain' (Triflers, p. 68).

11 XXXVIII, p. 62 and LXVII, p. 104.

12 Richardson obviously passed Cheyne's reassuring diagnosis on to his friends such as Aaron Hill who wrote on 6 July, 1738: 'I am positive from what you tell me, that there is nothing apoplectic in your distemper. And it is with no small addition to my pleasure that I find your friend Dr Cheyne, declaring himself of the same opinion' (Barbauld, Letters, I, pp. 13-14).

with the avocations of a business that demands so much care and attention, the next certain benefit must be for medicine'.[13] Cheyne's adoption of financial metaphors such as 'good Blood is a City Security for Long Life and Health', was clearly prompted by such objections (XXXVI, p. 60). He reassured Richardson that he was not suggesting that he should abandon his work, but merely break up the day with regular periods of exercise and light amusement. He facetiously suggests that if Richardson could abandon business entirely and 'live in the Country and follow a Post-Boy's Life a Horse-Back' then he might manage to live a little longer on 'Dog's Meat' with the help of 'a good deal of Evacuation and Apothocary's poison' (LI, p. 77). Even then, life would be short and fearful 'with perpetual Dread and Anxiety'. But by following Cheyne's *Natural Method,* Richardson would in time 'be able to follow your Business with Pleasure, live to provide plentifully for and see your Family settled without fear' (Ibid..). As we shall see, Cheyne was to convince Richardson that his methods were also a sound investment in the spiritual marketplace.

Cheyne's advice to Richardson was in keeping with his published regimens. He urged him to 'ride out every Afternoon, if possible five or six miles' and 'live as light as you can till you are clear, and ...drink Nothing but a little White wine and Bristol Water' (III, p. 32). He should find 'a golden mean' between his intake of wine and meat since 'a sedentary business will never bear both especially with one who wants a clear head and acute senses' (XXVII, p. 52). Richardson seriously began to adopt this 'light and least' regimen in the late 1730s, despite many minor crises ('plunges'), which Cheyne interpreted as merely the symptoms of a process of therapeutic purgation. When Richardson took to writing prose fiction, Cheyne renewed his recommendations for regular exercise, but finding the novelist averse to horse riding, he tried to suggest alternatives such as walking into the city from North-End or walking in his study whilst dictating to an amenuensis (XXXIV, p. 57). A fashionable alternative was the *Tremoussoir*, or chamber horse: 'you may dictate, direct, read in it and it rides better double than single'.[14] Richardson took up the suggestion and his

---

[13] Hill was shown Cheyne's letters and read the manuscripts of the 'Philosophical Discourses'. Writing to Richardson in 1738 he comments: 'I am leading you into a breach of the very advice I would give you, not to pour over tedious and roughwritten manuscripts. I should be more ashamed of my own than I am, but that I have comfort (bad as it is) to observe it more legible still than honest Dr Cheyne's' (Ibid., Letters, I, p. 14; 18) (sentiments shared by the present writer).

[14] XXXVII, p. 61. As Eaves and Kimpel note that some of these machines were on springs but the one Cheyne describes consisted of a seat attached to a long flexible plank (p. 63). Cheyne recommends this substitute for outdoor exercise in his advice to the elderly in NM, p. 301. Carol Houlihan Flynn's *Running out of Matter: the Body Exercised in Eighteenth-Century Fiction* in The Languages of Psyche ed. by Rousseau and Porter (1990), came to my attention too late for comment.

biographers remark upon the pleasing picture this conjures up of the corpulent printer dictating Pamela whilst sat astride this adult 'hobby-horse' (possibly accompanied by his wife! EK, p. 63). An even more comic image is that of the aged and weighty Cheyne who, by his own admission, loved the diversion of 'riding the Wooden Horse with Book and Candle' (XLV. p. 71). Whilst Richardson was struggling to write a sequel to Pamela, Cheyne remarked 'I never wrote a Book in my Life but I had a Fit of illness after' (XLIII, p. 69). Elsewhere, at a time when Richardson's application to business was upsetting his nerves, Cheyne remarked: ' I had a friend that advised me to write Books at such a Time, or to read or have read to me innocent Stories, Novels, or Plays'(LX, p. 92). Depending upon the circumstances, reading and writing can both cause and cure hypochondria, but in either case a nervous sensibility suggests refined taste and delicacy of sentiment.

Cheyne would not accept any direct payment for his medical advice. The pious Richardson had a religious fear of debt, so he sent frequent gifts of food (usually Colchester oysters), and new books to a literary Cheyne who grew to treat Richardson as a convenient supplier of the latest titles. His book requests give a clear indication of the physician's wide mature interests. Those relating to his pietist concerns are to be discussed later in this chapter, but he also sought out books on history and travel, including the Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe, in his Embassy to the Ottoman Porte, from the Year 1621-1628 Inclusive (1740), which Richardson edited for the Society for the Encouragement of Learning. Cheyne was impressed by Richardson's indexing abilities and contributed anonymous scholarly accounts of the properties of English spa waters to Richardson's edition of Defoe's Tour (1742). He also suggested works by Rapin, Camden, Heylyn and Bayle as sources of new material.[15] A View of the Levant, particularly of Constantinople, Syria, Egypt and Greece (1743), by the physician and traveller Dr Charles Perry (1698-1780), also took his fancy, but, although the author had recently been his guest, he 'denied to subscribe for it, being resolved not to engage any more subscriptions, being often deceived and always buying the Book cheaper afterwards'. Instead Cheyne deviously asked Richardson to get Perry's permission to have Leake bind up a set of the sheets and cuts for an anonymous customer! 'The Subject is entertaining but if I can guess of the Author, the Execution must be but indifferent'.[16]

Cheyne was also curious about the forthcoming Works of...Dr Pococke, containing his Porta Mosis and English Commentaries on Hosea, Joel, Micah and Malachi (1740), by a scholar who had earlier produced Latin translations from the

---

[15] Sale, Master Printer, pp. 39-44.
[16] Mullett Letters, p. 116.

Arabic. An interest in ecclesiastical affairs is reflected in a request for Pluralities Indefensible (1740), by Richard Newton (1676-1753), the founder and principal of Hertford College Oxford. Cheyne also sought out prose fiction as a 'kill-time', including The Dean of Coleraine (1742), a translation of Antoine Prevost D'Exiles's sentimental novel Le Doyen de Kelleraine, (though he was happy to read it in the original French). As already noted, he also expressed an urgent desire to see Fielding's Joseph Andrews (1742), and Pope's New Dunciad (1742), hot off the press.[17] All these demands were in return for a constant barrage of medical advice.

In The English Malady Cheyne had portrayed himself as the martyr to weak nerves *par-excellence*. Privately, Cheyne gave Richardson an even more vivid picture of his own fall into bodily degeneration than he had presented in his published account. Recalling the 'many Revolutions of Health and Corpority I have gone through', he signed himself on one occasion, 'your sadly experienced...friend' (XXI, p. 47):

> My Case was at first worse I think than any One's I think I ever read of or saw a putrified overgrown Body from Luxury and perpetual Laziness, scorbutical all over, a regular St Antony's Fire every Two Months, regularly the Gout all over six months of the Year, perpetual reaching, Anxiety, Giddiness, Fitts and Starting (LI, p. 77).

We have already noted Cheyne's avowal to Richardson that he had been virtually insane: a confession that prompted Cheyne to request, in a postscript, that all his trifling 'long Nothing-letters' be destroyed (LXI, p.95). When Richardson experienced serious bouts of mental derangement, Cheyne put it down to the 'Terror and Confusion' caused by 'Nervous Wind'. For twenty years Cheyne had himself endured bouts of these mental tortures, there having been times when he 'thought and thought the Walls and Floor of the House playing up and down with me' (XXXVI, p. 59). Richardson's sometimes sensational interest in mental instability in his fiction (both Clarissa and Clementina go temporarily mad), was rooted in personal experience, for which Cheyne provided a medico-religious rationale in terms of the imprisonment of the spirit in a corporeal frame.

Richardson passed on Cheyne's reassurances regarding delicate nerves to fellow-sufferers like Aaron Hill who were only too willing to commiserate: 'I cannot close my letter without a word or two concerning your *nerves*. Your telling me lately that those too sensible feelers are the root of your malady, made the most touching impression upon me in your behalf, for what I just then underwent in my own'.[18] Cheyne encouraged Richardson's circle to express their feelings through the

---

[17] Ibid, pp. 125; 121; 59; 67-9; 96; 63 and 122.

[18] Hill to Richardson, October 24, 1742, Barbauld Letters, I, p. 83.

vocabulary of physiological nerve function. The novelist adopts this terminology to describe his own response to Hill's The Art of Acting (1746):

> I attempted to read it not as a Printer; and, was not aware, that I should be so mechanically, as I may truly say, affected by it: I endeavoured to follow you in your wonderful Description of the Force of Acting, in the Passions of Joy, Sorrow, Fear, Anger etc. And my whole Frame, so nervously affected before, was shaken by it: I found, in short, such Tremors, such Startings, that I was unable to go thro' it and must reserve the Attempting it again, till your *Oak Tincture*...has fortify'd the too relaxed, unmuscled Muscles, and braced those unbraced Nerves, which I have so long complained of.[19]

Through a reverse process of reasoning, many of Richardson's admirers believed that his particular literary ability, characteristically capable of expressing delicate sentiments, stemmed from the peculiar sensitivity of his nerves. In a passage immediately following some complimentary remarks on Pamela, Cheyne is possibly one of the first to make this analogy:

> You need not question that I am sufficiently apprized of and have felt the Grief, Anguish, and Anxiety such a Distemper must have on a mind of any Degree of Sensibility, and of so fine and lively Imagination as yours, and it is happy for Mankind that they cannot feel but by Compassion and Consent of Parts (as one Member feels the Pain of another) the Misery of their Fellow Creatures of their Acquaintance; else Life would be intolerable (May, 1742, LXI, p. 94).

By talking in these negative terms Cheyne merely emphasises his adoption of a metaphorical analogy between the physiological theory of 'nervous sympathy' and a Shaftesburian notion that human society is held together by natural sentiments of sympathetic benevolence. Hill's remarks, quoted at the beginning of this paragraph, reveal that this metaphor had already become part of sentimental social parlance by the early 1740s. Although Cheyne never discussed 'nervous sympathy' as such in his published works (which pre-date the important scientific debate on nervous sympathy between Haller and Whytt), he encouraged an analogy between physiological and social mechanisms and in offering sympathetic reassurances promoted notions of a feeling community amongst his patients.[20]

Richardson was 'a Christian Brother', and 'a brother Hyp', but despite these fraternal expressions, Cheyne also considered women susceptible to the discomforts and rewards of nervous sensibility. Although he never specifically emphasises female

---

[19] 29 October, 1746, Carroll, p. 74.

[20] Christopher Brown, *The Nervous System and Society in the Scottish Enlightenment*, Natural Order: Historical Studies in Scientific Culture (1979); J. Dwyer, Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland (1987). There is no hard evidence for Cheyne reading the early work of Hutcheson, nor indeed Hume. It is to be noted that Cheyne, aware of the dangers of 'nervous' contamination, warns Richardson of the mental precautions that should be taken when entertaining 'a Brother Hip' in one's home (LXI, p. 94; LXVI, p. 164).

vulnerability, Cheyne shared Richardson's patriachal notion of women, as exemplary champions of virtue. We sense this shared concern in the relations that developed between Cheyne and Richardson's predominantly female households. Richardson accepted Cheyne's invitation to bring his family to Bath in the early summer of 1742. The most obvious outcome of the visit was an increased intimacy between their respective families. Richardson had a particular fondness for Cheyne's youngest daughter Peggy.[21] Cheyne used Peggy's exemplary dietary discipline to encourage Richardson to keep to his regimen: in a postscript thanking Richardson for 'your excellent Colchester Oysters', Cheyne reports a little self-righteously that, 'Your Favourite Peggy tasted them; my Wife and Niece gobbled them; I beheld and kept to my Quart of Milk and half Biscuit. My daughter sensibly mends and will I hope in Time thank you in Person and Mrs Richardson'.[22] Richardson's admiration for the exemplary Peggy was reciprocated:

> All my Family—Wife, Daughters, Nanny etc. (they are honest people)- admire you much; and if you wanted Women (as you have very good ones of your own) you might have your choice. Peggy says you are the perfect original of your Pamela, and, that Generosity and Giving, which in others are only acquired Virtues, are in you a natural Passion; and as others (the best) are like to give as much as to receive, you only like to give.[23]

Cheyne's portrait of his predominantly 'Female Family' conveys the same sense of virtuous domesticity that Richardson promoted in both his private life and fiction. Although there is evidence that Ffrances also had on occasions to submit to her father's dietary disciplines, it is appropriate that it was her more delicately framed younger sister Peggy, who as a visitor to North-End, became an early member of Richardson's coterie of women admirers.[24] She is one of those to whom Richardson 'could not deny' a sight of the earliest draft of Clarissa in 1744-5, when he describes her as 'the daughter of my late dear Friend the Doctor, a young lady of Taste and Learning'.[25]

Cheyne extolled the merits of epistolary friendship: 'We cannot know one another's Heart's but by our Tongues and Pens. I speak and think out. I have nothing to conceal, not my Faults and frailties. Let me hear freely and frequently' (XXIV, pp.

---

[21] Subsequent letters from Bath make frequent mention of 'your favourite Peggy', 'your great Admirer Peggy' etc. (LXVI, LXXIII, LXXV).

[22] LXXV, 19 November, 1742, p. 118. Cheyne also reminded him that 'your Favourite Peggy' is forced to take vomits 'every 4th, night' (12 October, 1742, LXXIII, p. 114).

[23] Margaret Anne Doody's source for 'a Natural Passion' as the title of her pioneering study was Sir Charles Grandison.

[24] For Peggy visiting North-End later in 1742 see LXIV, p. 100. One cannot help noticing that, like Clarissa Harlowe, Peggy Cheyne pre-empted an elder sister in the receipt of a legacy.

[25] Carroll, p. 63.

49-50). Offering privacy and informality, the familiar letter was an important element in the creation of a 'nervous' coterie of physician and patients. Cheyne became increasingly trusting in his letters to the novelist: 'Write as you find Inclination. I well know the Answer of a Friend one trusts who has gone through the same course'. (LXVII, p. 105). As their friendship deepened and Richardson's health deteriorated during 1741-42, letter writing itself took on an important therapeutic role (LXIX, p. 107). Aware of Richardson's interest in epistolary discourse, Cheyne urged his patient to write weekly letters reporting all his changing nervous symptoms: 'I spin out my Letters with Trifling to afford you Amusement of reading in your Low State, well knowing such a support used to be to me a Cordial when in the same Condition' (LXI, p. 94). Though intended primarily as advertisements for the efficacy of his methods, Cheyne clearly saw a therapeutic role in sharing these private confessions and he urged Richardson to re-read the testimonial letters printed in Part III of The English Malady. By 1742 Cheyne was supplying the novelist with further examples:

> Perhaps I may pick out among my many Letters received from Time to Time some others that either describe their Cases or record their Cure, which may be as Consolation or Encouragement for you, and might be of service to others in like cases when I am dead and gone, for my letters and Correspondence are not the Meanest Part of my Works and Experience; and as I do not think of printing more they may be as well deposited with you as with my successors.[26]

Collectively, Cheyne's exemplary autobiographical essay and these testimonial letters which carefully map the torments of weak nerves anticipate Richardson's introspective, 'nervous' epistolary method in his fiction.[27]

The familiar letter provided a private space where the distressed individual could exchange confidences for which there was no provision within the public and extremely formal social world. Cheyne apologetically describes his own epistolary style as writing 'without Restraint, in a running manner' and urges Richardson to follow suit (XLV, p. 72):

> Let the Pen write on to fill up with what Nature, Affection or Providence suggests; and it rarely happens but you are diverted yourself in Time and amuse your Friend if he is not otherwise strongly engaged, for all forced, laboured Writing in familiar letters is generally irksome to both (LXXV, p. 117).

---

[26] 2 November, 1742, LXXIV, p. 115. One, from a Mr Moore of Salisbury who was 'vapoured, low spirited, weak, feeble, and quite miserable' until he entered Cheyne's regimen, is copied into Richardson's notebook (Ibid., pp. 114-5).

[27] C. R. Flynn, Samuel Richardson: A Man of Letters (1982), Ch. 7, 'The Private Letter in Life and Art'.

Richardson expresses similar sentiments on 'the artless freedom' of epistolary friendship in his own letters to female friends.[28] As a novelist he allowed his pen to 'write on' to the point where he anguished over the resulting prolixity. Remarking that Richardson's nervous complaints appear to have relaxed during the 1740s, Eaves and Kimple 'wonder whether the writing of Clarissa provided the hobbyhorse Cheyne so often urged' (p. 157). Indeed, it could be argued that Richardson's persistent pursuit of writing epistolary fiction, after a successful career as a master printer, was in part a self-conscious exercise in occupational psychotherapy encouraged by his 'hyp doctor'.

## Richardson's 'Cyclus Metasyncriticus'

By 1739, Cheyne and Richardson's intimacy had deepened although there were occasional misunderstandings over their mutual obligations prompted by Cheyne's publishing difficulties. In the winter of 1741-2, Richardson's health reached a crisis, perhaps under the pressure, as Cheyne suggested, of feeling bullied by the parodists into writing a sequel to Pamela. Cheyne came to the rescue with a now famous prudish 'plan' for the sequel full of medical accidents and domestic conflagrations which Richardson dismissed as pertaining too much to the 'French Marvellous'.[29] By the summer of 1741 Cheyne was fearful that Richardson was becoming apoplectic and he spent the whole of December 1741 arguing for the safe adoption of a vegetarian diet as the only hope of relief: 'if you can read my Book with Attention; if Reason, Philosophy, or Experience have any Weight, and if your Distemper has not too far seized your faculties, you will be convinced, May Heaven direct you and its Providence protect you' (XLVIII, p. 74).

There were plenty of people amongst Richardson's acquaintances and immediate family with serious misgivings about Cheyne's methods. The Doctor warned Richardson to 'besure all Doctors, Apothocaries, all the Dealers in Physic, all the Voluptuous and Flesh-eaters will be point blank against you; and I believe old Nick will join in the Chorus but that neither moves nor puzzles me (LI, pp. 77-78). Nervous illness makes one vulnerable to the fearful stories of 'false friends'. To counteract this hostility, Cheyne actively encouraged enquiries amongst his other patients such as the theologian Samuel Chandler (1693-1766): 'Mr Chandler is a very fit Person, but he has had many Plunges he might have avoided for his Latitude in it,

---

[28] See especially to Sophia Westcombe (1746?) (Carroll, pp. 64-67).

[29] Mullett, XLIII p. 67 f. Richardson's response in an 'Intended Letter to Dr Cheyne on Pamela's Plan' may not have been sent, at least in the form we have (Carroll,pp. 46-51).

and a little Love towards a sweet Tooth and tit bits of Venison in the season' (LXIX, p.75). Through these introductions, Cheyne ensured that Richardson became initiated into the society of his vegetarian disciples in London and Bath. This significant feature of Cheyne's treatment points to a very simple but concrete way in which his followers, encouraged to become personally acquainted, took on the appearance of an informal religious society.

When Richardson sought Cheyne's views concerning the methods of professional rivals, their methods were peremptorily dismissed in his typically blustering fashion: 'The Sea Bathing is a new Joke. No such Popping Artillery can demolish such a rooted distemper as yours' (7 December, 1741, XLIX). Sir Edward Hulse, M. D. (1682-1759) is 'indeed a very good Practitioner in Drugs and on Cannibals...but knows no more of the cephalic Diseases than he does of the Mathematics and Philosophy to which he is a great Enemy and without them little is to be made of such Disorders' (Ibid..). Johnson's school friend, Dr Robert James (1705-1776), is: 'an ingenious man...who may fill up a Physical Dictionary to a tedious length with a Multiplicity of Need-Nots, yet I fear he understands as little of the Regimen of a Vegetable Patient as he does of a Nightingale' (LVIII, pp. 89-90).[30] But there was one man of whom he did approve: Dr John Freke (1688-1756), who he thought 'a very good judge' of the state of Richardson's blood.[31] As we have seen, Freke shared Cheyne's Behmenist interests, and was a friend of Cheyne's religious associates John Byrom, William Law and David Hartley.

It may have been divine guidance, a philosophical decision, or sheer desperation that persuaded Richardson to take up Cheyne's challenge and enter into a totally vegetarian regime, but whatever the reasons, Richardson resolved to became a full convert to Cheyne's 'philosophical medicine' at New Year 1742, to achieve 'Constitutional purification' and 'rejuvenescence'. Only ten days later, Cheyne writes that he is sorry to find 'you go on timerously, grudgingly, and repiningly' (LIII, p. 80). From the outset he emphasised the need for a mental commitment: 'If you take your Resol ution let it be steadily and couragiously *cent quis cent* and resolve to live and

---

30 Johnson contributed the proposals, dedication (to Mead), and some articles to James's Medical Dictionary, with a History of Drugs (3 volumes), 1743. Cheyne subscribed to this dictionary, which was printed by Richardson (LXXIX, p. 123.). This is the only evidence we have that he ever read, knowingly or otherwise, anything written by his admirer Johnson (DNB, X, pp. 657-658). See also Cheyne's dismissive comments on Boerhaave, Helmont, and other 'Pyrotechnical Enthusiasts' (LXII, pp. 96-97).

31 XXXIV, p. 58. Even Freke could be mistaken, when he declared that Richardson's blood had deteriorated as a result of entering into Cheyne's most ascetic 'regimen' (XXXIV, p. 58). Bechler argues that Richardson's imagery in Clarissa betrays his exposure to Freke's (and Law's) dualistic conception of fire as either destructive energy (embodied in Lovelace), or spiritual 'light' (embodied in Clarissa).

die by it for it is [like] Matrimony; for better and for worse' (LXIX, p. 75). The comparison with marriage, although obviously intended to be witty, suggests the ritualistic element in Cheyne's methods:

> If you do not come into the Scheme on Conviction it will be heavy, drawling and despondent Work which will much rebate of its efficacy...For God's sake do what you do, do with firmness and resol ution and ask Direction from above, for Vain is the Help of Man if you are seized with an Attack in your Head (12 December, 1741, L, p. 75).

He warns that 'trimming intermissions' in the diet will only serve to 'continue your Regret for the Flesh Pots of Egypt a little longer alive and you must absolutely die to them that you may live' (LIII, p. 79). The religious implications of the regimen are made evident in Cheyne's use of these and other scriptural metaphors. More explicitly, he observes that although Richardson is not a physician he believes him to be a Christian and as such should know that both St Paul and Jesus himself recommended fasting (Ibid..).

Richardson remained hesitant, impatient of results, and vulnerable to being deterred by unbelieving friends, but it must be emphasized that entering into this 'Trial' was not a light decision on the novelist's part. Friends and family thought he endangered his life through such severe abstinence, but despite their objections Richardson was 'initiated', into Cheyne's brotherhood of 'low-livers'.[32] Richardson's adoption of this medical regimen had all the quasi-religious implications Cheyne's vocabulary implies. He became a convert to what was seen by many of his contemporaries to be an informal religious sect with Cheyne acting as its spiritual director.

It was following Richardson's resolve to enter more strictly into Cheyne's dietary methods that he agreed to take his family to Bath in the early summer of 1742. After the visit, Cheyne's letters become noticeably more intimate. In his first letter after Richardson's return, Cheyne recalled their mutually enjoyable conversations in some highly sentimental language (LXIV, pp. 99-100). Always aware of the risk of exposing himself to ridicule, he felt he had found a spiritual ally with whom he could freely discuss the deeper religious meaning of his medical philosophy:

> Surely this Kind of Disorder you labour under and its late particular Exacerbation is one of the most effectual Means infinite Goodness could contrive to beget true Humility, to shew the Nothingness of Creature Comforts and sensual Enjoyments, making them of neither satisfaction or Account in the Eyes of the so afflicted beyond any other corporal Infirmity, and is inferior to Nothing but the Anguish of the mind and intellectual Remorse with which they are so often attended so as to be truly a temporal Purgatory; and happy are they who by them or any such Means in the Order of Providence suffered as proceeding from a merciful Father

---

[32] The terms are Cheyne's in LXVI, p. 102.

> in Conjunction with and Imitation of his own Son's, who was made perfect by Suffering became dead to every Thing but Infant love and Beauty, and I earnestly pray both in you and me and all those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity they may have this Effect, and that our Purification may be in this Life (22 June, 1742, LXIV, p. 100).

This is one of Cheyne's most explicit statements of his belief that the sufferings endured by someone with a delicate nervous sensibility may be an aid on the path to salvation. He had already told Richardson that suffering is 'the fate of all honest Men in this Life, which is a State of triall and Probation from another Mansion' (1739, XXXIII, p. 57). Now he pursues his fundamentalist medical doctrine further. The suffering endured in both the condition and the cure, through an imitation of that of Christ, leads to 'a Temporal Purgatory', which if patiently endured may lead to spiritual restoration with God.

Richardson sent a very positive response to this last letter, reporting a revival of his spirits since the visit. Cheyne was pleased because this improvement would 'silence my Enemies, and your foolish though well-meaning Friends' (LXV, p. 101). Encouraged, he gives a more detailed explanation of the religious significance of his method: 'I have often thought *Low-Living* and its Attendants to mend a bad or weakened Constitution of body, has a great Analogy and resemblance to the Meanest Purification and Regeneration preserved in holy Writ' (Ibid..). He believed that in a less sophisticated form, his method was known to ancient physicians as the *Cyclus Metasyncriticus:*

> Or the Transubstantiating Round and Circle, viz't. by Evacuation, Alteratives, Regimen, and Exercise, little Bleeding now and then, Thumb and other Vomits when the symptoms exasperate these will throw off the old corrupted Mass, representing repentance, Self-Denial, avoiding the Occasions of Sensuality and Sin, and throwing off the old Man and all his Works of Darkness. A low sweetening, but especially a Milk and Seed Diet will Shadow out Innocence, Simplicity of Spirit; and living under the Influence of the divine Spirit and his constant Prescence and the Inward peace, Unction, and Joy in the Holy Ghost will be resembled by the Freedom of Spirits, that Serenity, Activity, and Gaiety, on returning Health and mended Constitution resulting from this *Meta Syncriticus* (June 30. 1742, LXV, p. 101).

Cheyne believed that this process, although only seen to be the effect of second causes, was in fact the result of the 'Supra-natural Effect of a divine and unseen and imperceptible Power derived from the Love and merits of God' (Ibid..). He confesses that he could moralize much more on this topic but will restrain himself.

Of course he could not restrain himself, and in his subsequent medical directions he draws the appropriate analogies between medical practice and religious precept, noting that his favourite 'Thumb Vomits' are 'like Self Denial...without which Our Lord tells us none can be his Disciples'; a milk and bread diet makes us like the

little children 'without becoming such our Master tells us we can not enter the Kingdom of Heaven':

> Cold bathing is our Corporal Baptism and outward Cleansing which gives us present Strength to work our Cure in the Duties of the Vocation whereunto we are called. Go on with Faith and Patience and labour by the assistance from above to cleanse the Outward and Inner Man from all the Root of Bitterness and labour to perfect Health and Holiness in the Inward and outer Man in the Fear of the Lord (LXV, pp. 101-2).

Cheyne's regimen was a practical and symbolic act of purification, in keeping with the ascetic mortifying practices of the primitive church. The Doctor had undergone this 'trial' himself, but he reassures Richardson that he is in need of less rigourous cleansing:

> Your purification must be lighter than mine has been because you have never been so luxurious nor hurt your Constitution so deeply. But I must not flatter you that you will have your Purgatory and Purification. They pass through Death who do at Heaven arrive, says the Poet; but I think I can lead you through the State having passed it, I hope (LIV, p. 83).

'All true Religion', Cheyne declares 'consists in self-denial and Resignation' (LXI, p. 96). The ascetic prescriptions of William Law's devotional writings undoubtedly encouraged Cheyne in his promotion of this creed. Richardson is urged to keep to his diet 'believing, as the Mystics say, in Opposition to Reason, and hoping as the Scripture says, against Hope', because it is the only cure (LXIII, pp. 98). Within this specific therapeautic context, we find traditional Christian virtues take on a particular significance as Cheyne tells the novelist to 'have Faith, Patience and Perseverance which you know are sublime Christian as well as nervous Virtues' (LXXV, p. 110). Richardson's fictional heroines might be said to exemplify these 'nervous virtues' of pious frugality and spiritual purity.

On 16 October, 1739, at a time when a family scandal had severely upset his nerves, Hill wrote to Richardson:

> How crazily, my dear Richardson! are our active souls lodged, in the bodies too frail to preserve them from impressions of pain, and yet strong enough to confine them from changing their quarters ! Mine would quit its captivity with rapture; but it is chained to its limited prison - doing penance, I am afraid (in your friend, Doctor Cheyne's conception), to prepare itself for some more extended capacity of acting hereafter. Would to God it had power, in its present situation, to *transfer* all the good which it must not be allowed to enjoy! [33]

As Cheyne had warned at the outset, a practical adherence to his unfashionable doctrines could lead to criticism, and it was Hill who, having later reread An Essay on

---

33 Barbauld Letters I, pp. 32-33.

Regimen and The Natural Method (parts of which he probably saw in manuscript), had misgivings about Cheyne's extreme asceticism:

> I am sometimes afraid, lest you should fall too far into the practice of your friend Dr Cheyne's cold doctrines, of abstinence and excess of evacuations. All extremes are reproachable; and that gentleman, in many of his late writings, seems to forget that his own case is not everybody's; and is for treating us, all, like valetudinarians. Nature ought to be followed (helped, indeed, now and then), but never to be thwarted and crossed in her tendencies.[34]

Hill, who had recently been confined for a long time through illness, believed he had weakened his own 'spirits' through 'a too cold, too abstinent, regimen of diet'. He was merely repeating a common criticism of Cheyne's dietary doctrines, which the physician addressed at length in all his popular works.

Satirists had been quick to suggests that Cheyne's disciples followed his doctrines too rigourously, became anorexic or even died of self-starvation.[35] As a consequence, a whole chapter of The Natural Method, is devoted to this topic:

> Some have objected, that by thus strongly pressing the *Lightest* and *Least*, and confidently affirming, that *Temperance* and *Abstinence* have but one *Extreme*, the *Too-High*, or *Too-Much* in Food, I may seem to insinuat, that a *total Abstinence* may be the very best of all; or to think, that none ever hurt his *Health* by any Degree of Abstinence whatsoever. And yet it is a well-known *Fact*, that many have actually died by an obstinat Resol ution to take no Nourishment; and that from some violent Passion, as *Love*, or *Grief*, *Revenge* or *Discomfort*, some have pin'd away, and put an End to their Days (Part III, Ch. iii, pp. 207-8).

Cheyne describes in detail the physiological causes of what would now be termed anorexia nervosa. He goes to great lengths to insist that 'Death by Fasting implies a

---

[34] Ibid., I, p. 92, 2 April, 1743.

[35] This was never put more cogently than in the anonymous Diseases of Bath: a satire unadorned with a frontispiece (1737):

Big blustering Cheyne not the last in fame.
Tho' the muse lead up in the rear his Name,
Has sent such Colonies to Pluto's land;
The God was forc'd to beg he'd stop his hand...
In vain he toils to teach unruly Man,
T'enjoy firm health thro' life's determin'd Span;
And shew them how to guard themselves from ills,
By wholesome Exercise and sober Meals:
His senseless Patients but misconstrue him,
To stave their health on the opposite Extreme.
If he forbids to cram, they'll not ev'n chew:
If he says *Walk a Mile*, they scamper Two.
These exercise themselves quite out of breath;
And They, forsooth, will starve themselves to death.
Thus sense and Learning may prove fatal Tools;
When trusted to the management of Fools.
But where lies Cheyne's Blame ?—Say waspish Elves,
Who kills such Dupes ? - the Sage, or They themselves ?

direct *Monstrosity*' (NM, p. 110). Those who starve themselves to death 'to alleviat violent Pains, high and unnatural Passions, Discontent, or a *Tedium Vitae*', are, in Cheyne's opinion, already seriously deranged: 'They are *Lunatic* and out of their natural *senses*, (as all violent Passions are a temporary *Lunacy* and Madness) (Ibid. p. 211). Cheyne had been obliged to warn throughout his medical books that suicide 'is the most mortal and irremisible of all Sins' (NM, p. 242). Death through self-induced starvation 'is an Instance against the great Law of Self-preservation' (Ibid., p. 211).

Richardson was fully aware of this topical debate when he came to portray the temporary insanity of Clarissa, brought on by violent passion, followed by her refusal to eat or drink. In depicting her decision to adopt a very meagre diet of bread and water during her long protracted fatal illness, Richardson drew upon Cheyne's moral discussions of self-imposed abstinence. Richardson was careful to ensure that his heroine's refusal of solid food and subsequent decline could not be construed as suicide. It is Sally Martin (Mrs Sinclair's niece), who alerts Clarissa to her moral obligations: 'Being told by the woman that she could not prevail upon her [Clarissa], to taste a morsel, or drink a drop, she said. This is wrong, *Miss Harlowe*! Very wrong! -Your religion, I think, should teach you that starving yourself is self-murder (Letter 333)'. Clarissa asks for the assurances of the apothecary and physician that her self-imposed diet of bread and water is adequate to sustain life.[36] These responses are in keeping with Cheyne's frequent claims that we can survive on a very 'low' diet, citing such diverse figures as Cassian the Desert Father, John Law the economist, and Newton as examples of how a low diet activates genius.

When Richardson was engaged upon writing Clarissa, the Bath poetess Mary Chandler(1687-1744) died, it was popularly reported, from self-starvation as a result of an over-zealous adherence to Cheyne's medico-religious doctrines. Her popular poem, A Description of Bath (Bath, 1733), was published by Leake and had come from Richardson's press.[37] The hunchbacked Mary ran a milliner's shop where Cheyne's wife bought dress material for visiting patients. Her poetic activities were patronised by Ralph Allen's literary circle and she was introduced to Pope with whom she shared the misfortune of a 'crazy carcase'.[38] Mention has already been made of Mary's brother Samuel Chandler, as Richardson's associate and a fellow patient of Cheyne. When Samuel later contributed an account of his sister to Robert Shiels (or

---

36 Letter 441, p. 1276; l. 359, pp. 1117-8; l. 366, pp. 1129-30, and for Lovelace on the same theme, l. 371, pp. 1148.

37 Richardson printed the second (1734), to seventh (1755), editions for Leake, whose bookshop receives a glowing description. Richardson quoted a passage from it in his revisions to the fourth edition of De Foe's Tour (Sale).

38 SRO, GD., 33/63/8.

Shiells), Lives of the Poets of Britain and Ireland (1753), he was to remark upon his sister's 'extreme sensibility':

> [With], the misfortune of a valetudinary constitution, owing, in some measure to the irregularity of her form...she entered, by the late ingenious Dr Cheyney's [sic] advice, into a vegetable diet, and indeed the utmost extremes of it, living frequently on bread and water; in which she continued so long, as rendered her incapable of taking any more substantial food when she afterwards needed it; for want of which she was not able to support her last disorder, and which, I doubt not, hastened her death (p. 351).

This succinctly describes a decline into an anorexic type of condition which Richardson depicts in the account of Clarissa's long drawn-out death. Like Cheyne with his patients, and Richardson with his fictional heroine, Chandler was keen to defend his sister against any accusations of personal negligence which could be construed as an act of wilful suicide:

> But it must be added, in justice to her character, that the ill state of her health was not the only or principal reason that brought her to, and kept her fixed in her resol ution, of attempting, and persevering in this mortifying diet. The conquest of her-self, and subjecting her own heart more intirely to the command of her reason and principles, was the object she had in especial view in this change of her manner of living; as firmly persuaded, that perpetual free use of animal food, and rich wines, tends to excite and inflame the passions, as scarce to leave any hope or chance, for that conquest of them which she thought not only religion requires, but the care of our happiness, renders neccessary. And the effect of the trial, in her own case, was answerable to her wishes; and what she says herself in her humorous epitaph,
>
> *"That time and much thought had all passion extinguish'd"*
>
> was well known to be true, by those who were most acquainted with her.[39]

The pietist vocabulary of this account resembles that employed by Richardson in his fictional account of Clarissa's 'trial', and conquest of 'Passion' through ascetic discipline. Like Mary Chandler, Clarissa composed her own epitaph to record the deeper spiritual meaning behind her ascetic preparations for death.

**Richardson and the Mystics.**

Cheyne was only too aware of the unpopularity of his doctrines amongst his latitudinarian contemporaries, who tried to reduce Christianity to a few undemanding beliefs which did not impinge upon their everyday lives. Cheyne believed Richardson shared his unpopular fundamentalist views:

---

[39] Shiells, p. 348. Mary Chandler had developed her mind, having 'grown, by an accident in her childhood, very irregular in her body'. She found sympathy from Cheyne and Pope who both shared the misfortune of having constitutional disorders that had left them physically deformed, martyrs to pain and vulnerable to social ridicule. She left an unfinished 'large poem on the Being and Attributes of God' ('her favourite subject'). It is apparently lost, but if it would be interesting to see the extent to which it was informed by Cheyne's theodicy. Samuel's account ends with her poem 'On Temperance', a versification of Cheyne's ascetic principles.

> If some of our pretty Fellows were to see this doughty Epistle they would swear I was mad and you not wise, but I am not afraid you should mistake and despise my Insinuations who has always shown a Relish for Spiritual and internal Religion: and I hope by this Time has a better Opinion than the Generality of the World of the *Cyclus Metasyncriticus* (30 June, LXV, 1742, p. 102).

This revealing declaration of faith in Richardson's religious sympathies opens up the question of to what degree the novelist was initiated into the unorthodox origins of Cheyne's doctrines. Perhaps Richardson had first learnt of these mysteries by pressing Cheyne to elucidate a cryptic comment in the Character of George Baillie, which he had printed and distributed on the physician's behalf four years earlier; Cheyne alludes to Baillie's adherence to certain unfashionable religious practices:

> He spent the last Twelve years of his Life in constant Prayer, and uninterrupted Contemplation. It was truly a Life hid with Christ in God, and he passed through several States of Purification and Trial, unknown to common and unexperienced Christians, which if published, might be subject to the ridicule and Profane, and those several ones, as may be hoped, sufficient to annihilate self in him in all its Mortifications and Subtilties.[40]

Again we see Cheyne's characteristic caution. Whether or not the pious Richardson systematically studied the more abstruse metaphysical arguments in the *Discourses,* he probably asked Cheyne to enlighten him on matters of 'internal-religion'. We have already seen evidence that even before what was possibly a crucial visit to Bath in 1742, Richardson had become familiar with some of Cheyne's religious associates. When William Law's Appeal to All that Doubt (1742), appeared, Cheyne assumes that Richardson shares Law's cautious, quietist position regarding religious renewal (LVI, p. 88). Richardson's reminder to Cheyne (made in response to Cheyne's overly-spiritual plan for the sequel to Pamela), that 'the principal Complaints against me by many, and not Libertines neither, are, that I am too grave, too much of a methodist, and make Pamela too pious', must have struck a very sensitive nerve in Cheyne, who, as we have seen, spent the 1730s eager to distinguish quietist belief in an inner spiritual renewal, from the socially disruptive evangelism of the Methodists.[41] In addition to supplying Cheyne with a bound set of Law's works(as noted in chapter 8), Richardson presented him with a copy of the works of Boehme(29 August, 1742, LXIX, p. 106). Although he may not have studied Boehme very deeply, Richardson's interest in the mystic is confirmed by the survival amongst his papers of a copy of a

---

[40] XI, p. 40.

[41] Richardson's letter dated August 14, 1741, in Mullett, Letters p. 67.

passage from Boehme.[42] It was probably through Cheyne that Richardson later befriended both Law and John Byrom. He printed, at his own express desire, Byrom's poetical defence of Law's Spirit of Prayer, entitled Enthusiasm: a poetical essay. (1751), and Byrom's earlier verse defence of Law's religious views An Epistle to a Gentleman In the Temple (1749). By the time of his death in 1743, Cheyne had initiated Richardson both socially and practically into his close circle of intellectual mystical-pietists. As noted earlier, in 1744, when Richardson had finished the first draft of Clarissa, the intimate circle of those to whom he 'could not deny' a sight of the manuscript were George Cheyne's daughter Peggy, 'Mystic Dr' Heylyn and his wife, and 'Freke, the Surgeon..with his friend' (Byrom ?).[43]

Clarissa belongs with the later publishing work Richardson undertook for Law and Byrom, as a continuation of a long-term project to promote pietist works for which Cheyne had earlier sought Richardson's personal assistance. In early 1738, Richardson printed a 'Catechism' (untraced), at Cheyne's request, which the physician declared:

> a pretty Thing for People disposed to be serious and earnest about Religion. It will not go far with meer Rationalists, but I hope there will come a Time when such Instructions may relish even them: that is, when the Things of this World lose their Relish with them (VIII, p. 36).

In 1741, when he was asked to propose an outline for the sequel to Pamela, Cheyne suggested that: 'A good Library of sacred History, Natural Philosophy, spiritual Divinity, and innocent Triflers would be very proper for your Heroine, which if you want and cannot otherwise procure I will help you to' (XLII, p.70). Cheyne pursued this attempt to exploit the 'Pamela Vogue' until his death in 1743. Within the context of encouraging Richardson to indulge in 'light amusements', Cheyne frequently returned to the topic of the proposed catalogue:

> I wish you would think of employing a fit Person to collect and write a Character and short Contents of all the Books in English or French that are fit to amuse, divert, or instruct the serious, virtuous Valetudinarians of whatever Kind. Such a Catalogue, if judiciously collected by a Man of Virtue and Taste, would be great Charity, would be well received by the Virtuous and Serious of all Parties, and would be of great Service to the fair Sex, and keep many from the Playhouse and the Tavern, and perhaps from worse Places. This would come in very aptly with the Design of *Pamela*, and might perhaps be called a Catalogue of her library (5 September, 1742, LXX, p. 109-10).

---

42 Forster MSS (V&A), XVI, 2. ff. 46-47). As Sale (followed by Bechler) notes that this is a transcript of a quotation that was included in the appendix to Law's later work The Spirit of Prayer (1752). A transcript of a passage from Law's Appeal is found in the same bundle.

43 Carroll, p. 63.

Cheyne had established a precise plan of the categories of literary materials the catalogue should contain:

> The character of such Books should be absolutely that. I. they were on the Side of pure Virtue, without much Love Affairs. II. That they are interesting and gently soothing the amiable Passions of Friendship, Benevolence, and Charity; and III. that they had a sufficient Mixture of the Probable and the Marvelous to keep the Soul awake and suspend its too intense Thinking on its own misfortunes (LXX, p. 110).

His first requirement echoes his earlier, rather prudish objections to Richardson's portrayal of 'Love Affairs' in Pamela. In his second, he emphasises the sentimental 'amiable passions', he wishes to promote. The third qualification reinforces the moral and therapeutic bias informing this plan for a consoling miscellany for the reader of pious sensibility; itself presented as a light amusement to contribute to Richardson's management of his own nervous condition.

*Pamela's Library Catalogue* was to have guided those of a delicate sensibility towards pious texts as places of literary asylum. In The English Malady he had recalled the 'perhaps impertinent' circumstances surrounding his own spiritual recovery because

> the *Fright, Anxiety, Dread and Terror*, which in Minds of such a turn as mine (especially in so atrocious a *nervous* Case), arises, or at least is exasperated from such Reflections [i.e. of mortality], being once settled and quieted,...[pious reading] after becomes an excellent *Cordial*, and a constant Source of *Peace, tranquillity*, and *Cheerfulness*, and so greatly contributes to forward the Cure of such *nervous* Diseases' (EM, p. 333).

Cheyne had grandiose hopes that the catalogue would have a broader therapeutic role in preventing Britain's numerous hypochondriacs sinking into pessimism, Pyrronism and ultimately madness and suicide: 'Such a Catalogue for England, would be as useful as Bedlam is, and perhaps more so' (LXX, p. 110). It would provide its readers, particularly women, with a library of consoling literature with which to maintain their spiritual integrity. Here the victims of 'the English Malady' would find private sanctuary from the immoral world of public amusements, -the masquerades, public theatres, pleasure-grounds and 'worse places'- of the contemporary social-Bedlam condemned by physician and novelist alike.[44] In the moral geography of Pamela II, it is in this public world of vice (specifically located in London), where innocent piety is put on trial. More dramatically in Clarissa, it is amidst the deceptions of the fashionable capital where she has been abused with opiates, sexual violence and

---

[44] See Richardson's condemnation of public entertainments in The Rambler, 19, (19 February, 1751). Cheyne and Richardson's associate, William Law had published his Unlawfulness of Stage Entertainments (1724), and the same high-moral spirit of reform saturated the pages of Webster's Weekly Miscellany, which Richardson posted off for Cheyne's edification.

imprisonment, that the heroine's consciousness is temporarily fragmented and driven into delusion and madness before finding an inner strength and peace through abstinence, prayer, mortificatory illness and death.

Cheyne was typically overoptimistic in his belief that the catalogue would attract the interest of 'ingenious booksellers' who would be keen 'to club in it'. Leake could 'do little in it, having neither Sufficient Materials, Time, nor Knowledge', so ' 'London is the only Place for it', (LXX, pp. 108-9). Cheyne was enthusiastic:

> As to the Catalogue of Books for the Devout, the Tender, Valetudinarian and Nervous. I and all I have mentioned it to believe it would be of greater Use in England than any Book or Mean that has been proposed to promote Virtue and relieve the Distressed, I say than any that has been projected these many Years if Judiciously and experimentally executed by proper Persons, but Time, Experience, and different Persons though all Lovers of pure Evangelical Virtue must be employed, for others have neither Taste nor Judgement in such a Work. It ought to contain a Catalogue of all the best, easiest, and most genuine Books in all the Arts and Sciences as I. Spiritual and religious Works of the most approved practical Books of Christianity II. The most entertaining Books of History Natural and Political. III. Travels and the Accounts of all Countries and Nations. IV. Allegorical Histories, Adventures, and Novels that are Religious, interesting, and Probable. V. Poetry divine and Moral VI. Choice Plays, if any such, that recommend Virtue and good Manners. With a short Character and a Hint of the Design, and a just Criticism in a few Words of such Books their Editions and where most likely to be found in English and in French...As to the last Part it must be executed by a Person of Virtue, Temperance and Learning who with a good Taste has true Literature (17 September, 1742, LXXI, p. 111.).

He covers virtually all aspects of popular contemporary reading and clearly aimed at being eclectic in a plan that reads like an encyclopaedic directory, perhaps designed with Burton's compendious classic The Anatomy of Melancholy in mind.[45] In fact, the same letter reveals a more obscure source for Cheyne's conception: 'The best Model I could propose would be like the Catalogue of the mystic Writers published by Mr Poiret wherein their Character and Contents is finely and elegantly painted in a small Octavo in Latin'.[46] Poiret's catalogue, the Biblioteca Mysticorum Selecta (Amsterdam, 1708), an eclectic miscellany of extracts from the Christian mystics had earlier been a seminal text for Cheyne's quietist friends. A later request for Richardson to find an English edition of the Theologica Germanica, another

---

[45] In a brief allusion, G. S. Rousseau remarks upon Cheyne's idea that Pamela should enjoy the books of 'popular' science fashionable at the time (*Science Books and their Readers* in Books and their readers in the Eighteenth Century) (Leicester, 1982).

[46] Cheyne admitted that there were other models available in French, but none in English, accept a few poor attempts by schoolmasters (Ibid..). Cheyne directed Richardson to Paul Vaillant's bookshop in the Strand for Poiret's book, published by Westein. Vaillant had published the English translations of Ramsay's works and appears to have specialised in Continental books, particularly of a pietist-mystical nature. Just before his death, Cheyne begged Richardson to ask Leake's son '(who is really a fine civil young Man and will greatly support his Father's ill Humours from hurting them), to go to Mr Vaillant and send me a list of all his newest Books, Philosophical or Entertaining' (LXXXI, p. 124).

important Protestant mystical work published by Poiret, was probably connected with the compilation of the catalogue.[47] Both works had guided Cheyne through his crisis in 1705-6. Their accounts of the 'trials' of such female Protestant radicals as Bourignon, Leade and Guyon, suggest a neglected but rich source for Richardson's portrayal of Clarissa's individualistic spiritual self-possession; one which demands more research.

Cheyne offered to give the catalogue a preface 'with some Philosophical and Medical Observations to recommend it and suggest many proper Books particularly Books of Physic'. He continued to present the project as part of Richardson's therapy: 'it may amuse you agreably, and that will contribute to your Cure'. Later that month Cheyne reminded his patient to 'Try to get pleasant Ideas and kill Times; Set about something interesting; think of the catalogue'. Two weeks later he asks; 'What is come of the Catalogue? I have noble Fancies about it, which perhaps some Time will be drawn forth. Pray think and enquire about it' (LXXXI-III, pp. 11i-113.).

Unfortunately, we do not have a single comment of Richardson's regarding this project, but from Cheyne's remonstrances we can infer that the novelist had made some practical suggestions:

> As to the Catalogue, you have not a right Idea of it. It must not consist of Extracts or Abridgements of the Books but their Characters and a short Idea of them, which might be comprized in 10 or 20 Lines for as the catalogue must be very large, comprehending the purest, best, and most finished in all the common Sciences as far as a Valetudinarian can go in them. The book will be of reasonable 8 vo. Size on this Plan. Perhaps in the Summer or Vacation I may draw up a Sample of such a Project, with its Preface and Introduction, and direct to the best Books in my taste of physic, philosophy, and Religion, but this must be the Work of Time and several Hands proper, which I think you might pick up among the Booksellers (LXXIV, p. 115).

Keeping it to a modest size may have been in response to the advice from the more commercially minded printer. In the same letter, Cheyne adds that 'I scratched one Evening a Kind of Title Page which I also send'. This is worth reproducing in full as Cheyne's final word on the catalogue and further proof of how his medical, religious and literary concerns became synonymous:

> The Universal Cure of Lingering Disorders either of the Mind or of the Body, being The Characters, a brief Summary and Catalogue of the most approved Books, their Prices, and the Places where to be had, in all the Sciences fit to instruct in the Cure of Chronical Distempers, to Eradicate the black passions, to bend the vices to Virtue and Piety, to sooth Melancholy, Vapours, and Pain, and to support the Spirits under Misfortunes or Bodily Ails, either in the French or English Tongues. Collected and executed by a Society of Gentlemen, eminent respectively in the Theory of Physic or the Cure of Bodily Distempers, in Speculative or

---

47 LXXII, pp. 113-14. In his next letter (p. 115), Cheyne tells Richardson to abandon his search because he already has 'the best French edition'.

> Practical Divinity, in Ecclesiastical or Civil History or Natural Philosophy, in Travels of the Works or the Works of the Imagination. Which are fittest for the Use proposed. With a general Preface and Reflections on the Use and Benefit of such a Work and such Writings as agreeably withdraw the Mind from Thinking.
>
> Felix quem Faciunt aliena pericula Cautum. [48]

Seen out of context this wordy, curious product of the 'cult of sensibility' could easily be mistaken for the work of one of the centuries later satirists of the phenomenon; Smollett or Sterne perhaps. Indeed, as if aware of Cheyne's scheme, one anonymous satirist facetiously proposed founding an 'Academy of Sensibility'.[49] However, Cheyne was sincere in his aims to provide a cure for 'the English Malady'. *Pamela's Library Catalogue*, offering a universal panacea for readers disabled by their acute sensibilities, would have carried a medico-philosophical preface presenting Cheyne's theories of literary therapeutics.

The proposed title page resembles the many advertisements promoting quack cures for nervous disorders that rubbed shoulders with those for Cheyne's own medical works in the pages of contemporary journals and newspapers (in Cheyne's beloved Weekly Miscellany for example). This similarity is more than just the eccentric outcome of Cheyne's medical and literary obsessions for in fact these advertisements frequently cite booksellers as retail outlets for their products.[50] Propriety medicines were often on sale in bookshops, especially in spa towns. Leake's fashionable Bath bookshop and subscription library is a prominent example. Cheyne's literary accounts of 'philosophical medicine' had to compete with these other items on offer to the nervous sufferer in the fashionable marketplace.[51] Cheyne wanted to

---

[48] Mullett, LXXXIV, p. 126. When Cheyne refers to 'a Society of Gentlemen' he probably had in mind 'The Society for the Encouragement of Learning', founded in 1735 to promote the publishing of learned works that the booksellers might otherwise disregard as commercially unviable (C. Atto, *The Society for the Encouragement of Learning*, The Library, ser. 4, XIX, (1939), pp. 263-288; BM. Add. 6184-6192). Richardson was their official printer and Vaillant was one of several booksellers closely involved. In 1739, Cheyne told Richardson 'when I see the productions of the Society I regret having had anything to do with them' (ie. Strahan and Leake?) (Mullett, p. 102; XXVII, p. 51). Several of Cheyne's close friends were involved in the Society, including King and Hartley. Their success, Dissertatio de Structura et Motu Musculari (1738), was the work of a founder member, Alexander Stuart. In 1742 Cheyne instructed Richardson to send one of his 'Black Angels' around to Strahan's to arrange for a copy of An Essay on Regimen to be sent to Stuart's house: 'by Neglect he it seems was forgot and takes it amiss, being my Friend and Countryman' (LXV, p. 102.).

[49] Noted in Max Byrd, Tristram Shandy (1985), p. 52.

[50] J. Alden, *Pills and Publishing: some notes on the English Book Trade, 1660-1715*, The Library, vii (1952), pp. and P. S. Brown, *Medicines as Advertised in Eighteenth Century Bath Newspapers* Medical History, xx, (1976), pp. 152-168). With no reference to Cheyne this phenomena is noted by Rousseau in his 'Science Books and their Readers' (p. 233, footnote 181.), to which I am indebted for these sources.

[51] Cures specifically aimed at 'nervous' illness come very high up in Brown's quantitative survey of medicines on offer in Bath newspapers (p. 158.).

exploit Richardson's literary success to promote spiritual Christianity as the only lasting 'cure' for the modern mental malaise; scepticism and infidelity. For all its eccentric opportunism, Cheyne's project was based upon a sophisticated philosophical theory of the relationship between reading, mental health and moral psychology, and was in keeping with the didactic aims of Pamela's creator. Cheyne died in the following April, and the 'catalogue' as such never materialised.[52]

Another pietist literary project in which Cheyne engaged Richardson's help reached more obvious posthumous fruition. It has already been noted that in 1742 Cheyne was approaching Hartley, Byrom and Law as associates 'acquainted with the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Universal Restoration', for their opinion of the theosophical works of Baron Marsay.[53] Cheyne asked Richardson if he knew of 'any person having a taste of Spiritual Religion', to undertake the translation of Marsay's 'L'Essence de la Extract de religion Chrétienne', which he was willing to pay to have printed so it could be given away *gratis*, it being 'beyond everything I ever saw' (LXXIX).[54] Cheyne was going to add a 'preface on Physics and Divinity', and noted that there were more volumes to follow.[55] Richardson commissioned a French refugee, but three weeks before he died Cheyne complained of inaccuracies and expenses. Richardson's further role is obscure, but an edition of Marsay did eventually appear at Edinburgh as Discourses Concerning the Spiritual Life (1749). The prefatorial, 'Letter giving some Account of the Author with remarks on other Writers, Commonly called Mystic or Spiritual, to J. F. Esq'., can now be identified as the work of Lord Pitsligo, and it includes an extract from a letter from Cheyne to Heylyn providing biographical information on Marsay.[56]

---

52 The 'catalogue' may have been directly connected in Cheyne's mind with Chevalier Ramsay's call for a 'whole philosophy of sentiment and the complete theology of the heart', being contained within a 'Universal Dictionary', in his Apology for the Free and Accepted Freemasons (Dublin, 1738). This was a call to the Freemasons of Europe to unite into a 'spiritual empire' held together by the 'tie of virtue and science' (translated in, R. Freke Gould, The History of Freemasonry, 3 volumes, (Edinburgh, 18), III, pp. 84-89). Curiously, 'The Society for the Encouragement of Learning' had ties with *philosophes* in Paris through their negotiations to publish Freval's English translation La Spectacle de Nature (1732-1750) by Abbe Pluche (1688-1761), who was a friend of Chevalier Ramsay and shared his anti-Newtonian theology.

53 Talon, p. 707. For Marsay, see Chapter 3, n. 22. On 19 Nov., 1742, Cheyne asked if Richardson could read French, because he can recommend some 'leisure reading that will rejoice your heart as well as enlighten your understanding' (LXXV).

54 G.S. Rousseau misidentifies this as a work published by Poiret, but it refers to Baron Hector de Marsay's Témoignage d'un Enfant de la Vérite et Droiture des Voyes de L'espirit, ou Abrégé de L'essence de la Vraie Religion Chrétienne par Demandes et Responces (Paris, 1740).

55 Marsay published five volumes of his Works at Paris (1738-40).

56 NLS, Acc. 14796/103/25. The addressee was a quietist associate, James Ferguson of Pitfour. Details of attribution etc., in my unpublished paper, 'Mystical Jacobitism: Lord Pitsligo's Prefaces to Marsay'.

Within a year of Cheyne's death, Richardson began work on Clarissa. Bechler has indicated how theosophical concepts influenced Richardson's overall structuring of the work. This is manifest in his defensive remarks concerning the novel's much criticised tragic ending when Clarissa's soul is allowed to, as Hill put it, 'quit its captivity with rapture'.[57] When inundated with pleas to allow Clarissa to live Richardson refused to compromise religious doctrine and pander to the desires of an 'age given up to diversion and entertainment' in which 'self-denial and mortification [are] blotted out of the catalogue of Christian virtues'.[58] In the Postscript for the third edition, he discusses the need for a new type of Christian tragedy, reminding his readers that this fallen world made up of 'intermingled good and evil' is merely a 'state of probation'.[59] But it is in a private communication to Lady Bradshaigh that he gave his fullest defence of a work which, he insists, if it 'must be supposed of the novel kind', must be read as 'a religious novel':

> A Writer who follows Nature and pretends to keep the Christian System in his Eye, cannot make a Heaven in this World for his favourites; or represent this Life otherwise than as a State of Probation. Clarissa I once more averr could not be rewarded in this World (Carroll, p. 108).

Nature for Cheyne, Law and their fellow Behmenists was a place of cosmic struggle between the light and dark forces of divine reintegration. As Bechler has argued, in Clarissa Richardson was presenting in a popular and dramatic form, some unpalatable truths about the opposition of pure spirit and corrupt matter, the origins of evil, and the nature of earthly existence. He was to provide a sort of Scriptural 'key' to the spiritual message of his novel in the little known Meditations Collected from the Sacred Books; and Adapted for the Different Stages of Deep Distress; Gloriously surmounted by Patience, Piety and Resignation. Being those mentioned in the History of Clarissa as drawn up by her for her own Use. Although printed in 1749, this was only circulated privately. There are striking similarities between Cheyne's proposals for '*Pamela's Library Catalogue*' and Richardson's aims with Clarissa's Meditations as recently described in an interesting account by Tom Keymer.[60] Privileged recipients of the Meditations (Peggy Cheyne amongst them ?) talked of their healing properties in distinctly Cheynesque terms. Typically, Edward Young urged publication 'for the sake of all the afflicted, to whom it will be the richest cordial'.[61] In the light of

---

57 The following account owes much to remarks by Bechler (pp. 94-6), and Lesley Barry, *Anafractous Way* in same collection (pp. 110-11).

58 Clarissa (Everyman, 1933), IV, p. 533). Subsequent references to Clarissa are to the Penguin edition unless otherwise stated.

59 Clarissa (Penguin), p. xx.

60 T. Keymer *Richardson's 'Meditations'* in Richardson: Tercentenary Essays, p. 105 and passim.

61 Quoted in Ibid., p. 102-3, with similar remarks from others.

Bechler's account of a theosophical structure underpinning the novel, it is apposite to find Keymer remarking that when Clarissa is read from the viewpoint of these (partly suppressed) Meditations it 'begins to look, retrospectively, like an allegory'.

The postscript to Richardson's explanatory letter to Lady Bradshaigh illustrates how his conception of his own nervous sensibility, his consequent adoption of Cheyne's regimen, and his radical religious aims as a novelist, were all part of an integrated view of earthly life as a place of, what Law called, 'Strife and Contrariety'.[62] Richardson describes his nervous sufferings whilst losing six sons and many close friends and relatives within a few years:

> I am very susceptible, I will venture to say, of Impressions of this Nature. My nerves were so affected with these repeated Blows, that I have been for seven Years forced, after Labouring thro the whole Medical Process by direction of eminent Physicians, to go into a Regimen, not a Cure to be expected, but merely as a Palliative; and for Seven Years past have forborn Wine, Flesh, and Fish. From these affecting Dispensations, will you not allow me Madam, to remind an unthinking World, immersed in Pleasures, what a Life this is of which they are so fond? And to endeavour to arm them against the most affecting Changes and Chances of it (15 December, 1758. Carroll, p. 110).

Richardson hoped to offer a spiritual palliative in an age he saw as sick with novelty and fashionable surface glare. Cheyne, who shared this vision, fostered Richardson's 'relish for spiritual and internal religion' and educated him in an unfashionable account of the consequences of the fall and the struggle between good and evil, perceived as a restless internal struggle between conflicting desires.

Just as Cheyne's 'purificatory' methods of religious medicine w ere formulated within this Behmenist metaphysical framework, Clarissa's final purificatory observances must be viewed within a macrocosmic timescale of spiritual restoration. In this context, it is of particular symbolic importance that her bodily decline and spiritual apotheosis dates not from the time of her rape, nor of her temporary insanity, but from the time of her physical imprisonment in the sponging house. Mark Kinkead-Weekes notes the significance of this pivotal point in the narrative: 'Release from prison becomes then, a release from the confinement of the world...yet the prison is also a turning-point in a more significant inward way'.[63] Margaret Anne Doody observes that 'Clarissa forsakes her body, as she escaped from Mrs Sinclair's house' and provides a valuable account of the religious importance of the pervasive imagery of imprisonment.[64] As we have seen, Cheyne often employed such metaphors, describing the fallen world and the corrupt corporeal body as a gaol or

---

62 Law, An Appeal to All that Doubt in Works (London, 1763), VI, p. 134. Quoted in Bechler, p. 94.

63 Kinkead-Weekes, Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist (1973), p. 256.

64 Doody, A Natural Passion (1974), Chapter 7; see esp. pp. 203-4.

'flesh-prison' of the potentially angelic spirit: 'the Spiritual Substance may be so long imprison'd...for some moral End in the *Oeconomy of Providence*, either of *Purification* or *Punishment*' (NM p. 6). After being locked in the sponging-house, the most blatant symbol of her humiliating imprisonment in a fallen world, Clarissa's angelic nature had endured enough 'punishment'. Mentally reconciled to an inevitable reunion with the God she enters into her *Cyclus Metasyncriticus*. As Kinkead-Weekes remarks, the receipt of Mrs Norton's letters immediately following the imprisonment 'announce a new perspective: a call to recognise and submit to the workings of providence in a tragic world' (p. 256). Clarissa sees her own spiritual trials within an eternal timescale that Lovelace cannot comprehend. It is Mrs Norton who, just as Clarissa enters into her state of purification asks 'what, my dear, is this poor Needle's point of NOW to a *boundless* ETERNITY ?' (l. 309, p. 991). The emblem of the snake with its tail in its mouth, the hermetic symbol of eternity carved on Clarissa's coffin, betrays the theosophical mystery underlying the novel's deliberately detailed surface structure of carefully observed day to day reality. It was a resonant symbol favoured by Cheyne and his Behmenist associates.

# CONCLUSION

'Immortal Dr Cheyne' departed from his 'Flesh Prison', on Wednesday, 13 April, 1743. The circumstances surrounding his death were recorded in a letter to Richardson (probably from Leake's son). Cheyne had been feverish for about a week and 'though the Doctor's Friends were not apprehensive of his imminent Danger, he was himself. He talked to his family of his death as of a natural Consequence, though he did not imagine it so near'. On the day before he died, Cheyne called for Dr David Hartley, who arrived from Ralph Allen's house, Prior Park, in the evening to find Cheyne's brother-in-law in attendance. Hartley 'went into the bed-chamber but the Doctor was dozing':

> The next morning he visited him about Eight. He was then very easy, but his Pulse was gone. He did not know Dr Hartley, as he had not seen him in his Illness; but he was still sensible. It was not above Ten Minutes after he left, that the Doctor left the World. His death was easy, and his Senses remained to the last...the World has lost a great and able Physician; You, my dear Sir, a truly valuable Friend; and I, one greater than my Merits. As long as health shall be reckoned a Blessing, and the preservation of Life a duty, both rich and Poor must condole the death of their common Benefactor.[1]

His 'crazy carcase' was buried in the vaults of Weston Church near Bath, where his half-brother was the incumbent, and where one can still see the fine Italian marble memorial plaque, emblazoned with an emblematic pestle and Aesculapian snake, which was later erected in his memory. Cheyne left his executors - his half-brother William Cheyne, his brother-in-law the London goldsmith George Middleton, his son-in-law William Stewart, and 'Mystic Doctor' Heylyn - complex instructions on how to manage a trust fund in excess of £7,000 which Cheyne set up in 1735 for his wife and children. His house, with its furnishings, plate and library went to his widow. The will concludes: 'I leave to all my servants one years wages to be given to them over and above what may be their usual due at the Term after which I dye. I leave to my servant Thomas Hancock five pounds to be duly paid him in Two terms of the year during his lifetime. I leave also orders that his youngest son be bound 'prentice to any honest Trade at my Charges' (Prob., Class II, 727).

Richardson's notebook closes with transcripts of the many eulogies in both verse and prose which appeared in the periodicals. The Gentleman's Magazine (XIII, 218), recorded that Cheyne's 'System has a peculiar tendency to promote Virtue, and Religion, and to calm the Passion, refine the Mind, and purify the heart'. An eleven-

---

[1] Mullet, Letters, p. 130.

stanza elegy, *On the Death of Dr Cheyne* (possibly the work of Charles Wesley), affirms Cheyne's wisdom, temperance, learning, affability, and philanthropy:

> Fee'd or unfee'd, by Rich or Poor,
> He all his Art employ'd
> With artless remedy to cure,
> And give what he enjoy'd
>
> Health, which, by him, by all confest,
> To Temperance we owe;
> The cheapest, easiest, safest, best
> Physician here below.[2]

Richardson also kept the following verse originally penned in Latin. It provides a suitably overblown epitaph for his 'Immortal' physician:

> Open thy shining Gates, thou Milky Way !
> And to thy Stars a Kindred Star convey,
> Cheyne, who from sulph'rous
> Bath now upward climbs
> Free from the Place's Luxury and Crimes,
> Once hypochondriac, of portentous Size:
> Since, lively, slender, by his Milk's supplies;
> His strength, restor'd, new brac'd his Nerves and Skin
> Then lax and flabby, strenuous now and thin
> Life's fundamental Threads protracted long,
> Beyond his Years in Mind and Body strong,
> This his sole Precept-*on a little live*
> And follow'd what he did so justly give;
> For, while Earth, from carnage and from Wine
> Abstaining, he on harmless Milk would dine.
> Accept then, Milky Way, this healing Guest;
> And heavn'ly Joys, eternal Milk, he'll taste:
> Ambrosian Fruits, and Nectar Draughts he'll scorn,
> And quaff but Milk from Amalthea's Horn.[3]

**********

The project to provide a more substantial and accurate biographical account of Cheyne's career supports the claim that his intellectual legacy was more original and influential than has hitherto been supposed. Attention has been given to Cheyne's place within various intellectual traditions and social groupings. His contact with several major figures, notably Richardson, has been clarified. It has been argued that Cheyne's unorthodox religious interests did not mean a retreat into radical, antisocial

---

[2] Ibid., 128-9 (last stanzas head Chapter 5 above). John Wiltshire suggests that it was a model for Dr Johnson's *On the Death of Dr Levet* (1782) in his Johnson in the Medical World, p. 208-9.
[3] Mullett, Letters, p. 127.

irrationality. A stance of outward conformity combined with a distinctly quietist, intellectual form of pietism provided Cheyne with sentimental doctrines adaptable to the requirements of a socially and economically successful Hanoverian physician. It has also been shown that Cheyne was far from alone in being able to reconcile his apparently divergent commitments to mystical-pietism and an imaginative version of popular Newtonianism. In so far as he attempted to reconcile science and religion Cheyne's writings sometimes anticipate some of the concerns and solutions of later eighteenth century, Romantic thinkers.

Although I have followed in the footsteps of Bowles and Rousseau in making an essential connection between Cheyne's private, professional, and intellectual life, I have avoided offering any retrospective diagnosis of either his physical or mental trials within the conceptual vocabulary of modern medicine or psychoanalysis. This is not simply because I feel that such an approach would be entirely inappropriate or fallacious (although I do have misgivings about amateur attempts in this direction), but rather because I am unqualified to offer such analyses, especially where the evidence is both complex and fragmentary.

It is perhaps inevitable in a study of this kind that there are places where one still hopes for future clarification from as yet undiscovered material evidence. One would like to know how Cheyne met Pitcairne, and how sympathetic they were towards theosophy when they worked together in Edinburgh. Although I have clarified Cheyne's contact with a complex network of interconnected sects, the precise nature of his personal contact with groups like the French Prophets or the Bow-Lane theosophers still remains cloudy. How far did his ecumenicism stretch? Despite Ramsay's conversion, we know that Cheyne was anti-Papist. But did the mature Cheyne, like his young follower, the Bristol pietist Thomas Dyer, regularly attend an Anglican Church and also patronise the prayer 'meetings' of old dissenters and other pietist sects? And what exactly were Cheyne's politics? Did he harbour any private Jacobite sentiments which he shared with his brother, father-in-law, and associates like Ramsay, Dr William King, George Garden, Pitsligo, Byrom and William Law? These are just a few of the questions that can only be answered if more evidence comes to light.

There are also several lines of enquiry which it has not been possible to represent or pursue. In the context of the application of experimental philosophy to moral enquiry, there is more to say about the place of Cheyne's early attempts to apply mathematics to metaphysics within a tradition that might be traced directly from Locke and Newton, through Craige, Cheyne and Colin Maclaurin to Hume. It has been impossible to extend this study geographically beyond Britain, or

chronologically much beyond Cheyne's death-date, although it has been indicated that his work was translated and continued to be published well into the next century. More work needs to be done on Cheyne's debt to Continental pietist movements and his reciprocal influence abroad, particularly in France where his work was translated and read by the philosophes. Shifts in approaches to medical history away from practitioner to patient, and away from intervention to prevention, might be combined with theories of reader response to explore further Cheyne's relationship with his patients, and their perceptions of him as healer, confessor, moral guide and judge. More might have been said of Cheyne's influence upon specific figures such as Johnson, Pope and Richardson. And more generally, there is more work to be done upon the role of reading as a form of psycho-therapeutics amongst contemporary bookbuyers.

Here might be the place to set Cheyne's life into some larger frame as my predecessors have attempted. Roy Porter has established Cheyne's position within a history of proto-psychiatry from the Glorious Revolution to the Regency, and seen his work on 'the English Malady' as representative of an increasing secularisation of perceptions of mental illness. Anita Guerrini employs Cheyne to contest the thesis that an emergent vitalism in his late work did not represent a radical abandonment of earlier, purely mechanistic interpretations of Newton. In contrast, George Rousseau places emphasis upon mystical-millenarianism and presents Cheyne's career far more problematically as a challenge to our established notions of Newtonian and Neo-Platonic, of mechanistic and vital, of orthodox and radical, of Augustan and Romantic. If, as I have suggested, Porter's account tends to simplify Cheyne's political significance, and Guerrini neglects, underestimates or dismisses Cheyne's mysticism, Rousseau is too indiscriminate in his analysis of Cheyne's obvious engagement with a complex pietist tradition. But all these predecessors provide important contexts within which we must continue to examine Cheyne's work. In the present study I have addressed the places where these perhaps incompatible images of a messianic or secular Cheyne may be reconciled or rejected, and hopefully I have also contributed some fresh perspectives of my own.

I have attempted to relate Cheyne's ambivalent roles as fashionable Hanoverian physician who circulated the tenets of a mystical millennium, as an ascetic who enjoyed conviviality, as a 'wit' who made claims for politeness, as a quietist who 'roared' around Bath like a bull, in short as 'a most Moral and reasoning Madman' who earned the friendship of the leading figures of his age. If the pun may be forgiven, Cheyne remains a bulky subject in which many 'crazy' humours collide. He remains a figure full of anomalies, some individual, some public, but those very anomalies are

perhaps important signifiers of the heteroglossia of conflicting discourses being formulated, represented and contested during the early Enlightenment period. Initially it had been anticipated that this thesis would need to carry an apologetic preface justifying the 'off-beat' nature of its subject. Such excuses seem unnecessary now, as increasingly Cheyne's career serves to illustrate some of the many conflicting and divergent cultural cross-currents eroding away at the base of a once monumentally unassailable *Age of Reason.*

# Appendix I:

## Letters on Newton, Poiret and Theosophy from Mungo Murray to Colin Campbell of Ardhattan: 1701 and 1704

The following two letters from the Papers of Colin Campbell (on deposit, EUL), provide a clear insight into the way the discourse of theosophy interacted with Newtonianism amongst the circle of quietist Scottish religionists with whom Cheyne was in close contact shortly after his breakdown. According to the Chronicles of the Families of Athol and Tullibardine (1908) (I, p. 475), the sender, Mungo Murray, was minister of Logierait, a resident in Sock, and had been appointed tutor to the Earl of Tullibardine's eldest son, Lord Murray in 1700. Colin Campbell's contact with Pitcairne, Cheyne, and Craige is discussed in Chapter 2. Campbell sent Murray original papers on a variety of virtuoso topics, including judicial astrology. In the opening of the first letter of 1701, Murray informs Campbell of the favourable reception of a manuscript he had sent, which included an account of Newton's theory of attraction. Murray had passed this on to Tullibardine, and 'several other ingenious gentlemen' who were 'anxious to have a double of it'. Murray praises Campbell's use of sophisticated mathematics to explain certain unusual natural phenomena whilst pointing out the theological and philosophical consequences of his method. In the remainder of this, the first letter reproduced below, Murray introduces Campbell to the theosophical system of Pierre Poiret (see Chapter 3):

You have intermixed several most curious observations which I scarce heard of before as the calculation of the varieties of our System from Newton and that which you call a primary law of nature; the mutual tendency of all particles of matter to one another in a duplicate reciprocal proportion: I would gladly know how long since & by whom this was taken notice of, because I find it agreeable to the principle of a present eminent writer, [Poiret] who undertakes to shew that all the ordinary systems of natural phylosophy, yea & of all other human sciences are hitherto void of solid grounds except the Mathematicks whereof he makes no great reckoning calling it only a superficial science; which as well as other studies the way it is generally [.....] is so far from contributing to the perfection of the soul, that on the contrary it is no loss a [.....] to it than worldly mindedness, self seeking, & the most gross outward sins the malignity whereof consists in alienating the mind and affection from him who ought to be the ultimat, yea and the sole object of the supreme faculties therof. This may seem very odd; but he offers to demonstrat it a priori from His corruption which original sin has [devised?] upon reason ( a lower & accessory faculty as he calls it) which is the parent and nurse of these sciences: so that it can yield no true light, untill it be mortifyed & [.....] by divine grace; that is until it is illuminated by faith, or by God's residing into the higher and essential powers, which were designed for his imediat habitation. Hereupon he affirms that unless we seek & attain to the Kingdom of God within us in the first place, ye more industriously we exercise our reason (being so corrupted) the more it will involve us in darkness & confusion. He allows the use of it with [measure?] to what is absolutely neccessary for this present life: but will have its curiosity after Knowledge which Augustin understands to be meant by the lusts of ye eyes, mortifyed intirely as well as the Lusts of ye Flesh, & ye Pride of Life; and that in conformity to that [posterity? .....] of & forsakeing the world, self denyal & takeing up the cross which is the sum of the Gospel indispensably recommended by our Saviour's Doctrin & Example: In consequence of this he proceeds to confirm his position aposteriori from the continual contradictions

that are in the greatest wits & pretenders to reason to themselves & to one another and tho' the Mathematicks seems to be exempted from this, he observes its futility as being superficial, & not serveing to discover a substance or the inward nature of things and its perniciousness on the former accounts, and further he instances in the opprobria mathemicorum as if I remember the quadratur of a circle & of ye diameter a quadrangle to a side & ye like. I have not the book wherein he touches this at hand, but I think he says that the support of mathematical knowledge & the science itself is consistent with the greatest corruption & with the state of the damned & all this & much more tho' himself is well skill'd in it.

He not only pretends to refut the comon principle of all science as acquired by human industry without supernatural aid, but likewise to lay down such solid ones himself & such deductions from these as will serve for all & solve clearly all difficulties which were thought inexplicable as concerning predestination, [.....] the liberty of ye will, yea & the Trinity the impression whereof he says is in every creatur, so that without the knowledge of [.....] no created thing can be solidly understood.

He was once a great Cartesian; but afterwards falling into the acquaintance of Antonia Bourignon, whom he looks upon as being divinely inspir'd he professes to have learned these principles from her. I find that besides his singular piety, many learned men of all professions look upon him as the greatest phylosopher of this age: His name which I suppose you have heard is Peter Poiret. His Books in Latin are Cogitationes Rationales whereof he made a Second Edition in favour of his new principles a book de Eruditore Solida Superficiaria et falsa & another De Christiana Librorum Educatione. In French his Divin oeconomy in seven little toms which I have beside me haveing acquired so much of that language some six years agoe that I am able with ease to understand such books as I meet wth in it. Our good friend Dr George was so wrought upon by his & ye like books that he abstracted himself wholly from ye world liveing most christianly & deriving most exemplarly in the begining of last summer at London. Where he adode these two or three years bygon, haveing the occasion of the conversation of a woman there who is said to be illuminated.

Poiret's sentiment of judicial Astrology is that there is a good foundation for such a [science ?]. That Adam's body in innocency was the matter [.....] of the visible Creation, that all ye perfections of the rest were centred in it that it has dominion over all other material beings in it, but since the fall that corruption has invaded all & the body of man as others terrestrial become subject to ye celestial power whereby the length of every ones life is so determin'd that it cannot naturally go beyond ye point as appears from Job. 14. 5. Tho first a man may & does most frequently shorten his days by ill conduct as Psalm 55. 24 & 2dly God by way of favour prolongs it to some of his children as to Hezekiah. He illustrats this by the example of a clock or watch, which runs according to the length of the spring or chain, and whosoever understands the structure of such different macins, he knows exactly that they will goe such a precise length & that it is not naturally possible that they should goe farther, but that its naturally possible that they should not run out their course by reason of a thousand inconveniences falls & other accidents, which stops them, & are [most?] ordinary; but if a new cause supervenes which is more powerful than the natural force of ye Spring, that may wind up the watch, when it is naturally ending & so prolong its course so he says it is with man's life. In the moment of his formation the spirit of the world & of the Stars enters into him fashions his macin & makes his springs & chain strong or weak long or short, and at his birth the same is more or less wound, up when by respiration he incorporats abundantly into his blood the same spirit or effluvias of the stars & elements.

As to the other specialities which may be prognosticated by this science; he says that before the fall the Imagination was subject to the command & direction of reason, that by sin, this soveraignty was lost & voluntarily resigned, this subject exalted to the throne that the Imagination itself is become enslav'd to the irregularities of ye passions, senses & all externall objects, whereby it is acted, deceived and confounded. That the strong impressions of ye great bodies as are the heavenly, the combination whereof penetrats, moves & forms all that is on ye Earth, gives the general biass to the Imagination, which is the Spring that acts on the whole body, on its senses & humours, as they again do reciprocally act upon it. Hereupon he infers that the liberty of the will being habituated to determin itself according to those impressions & not failing to follow them in a mechanical way it will be easy to forsee from the knowledge of the manner where in the imagination at first did receive the Impressions of ye great & durable objects of the universe from the knowledg of the combinations wherein they were for acting & by that of the natural changes which regularly happens thereafter he says [that?] it will be easie to forsee the futur conduct of the Imagination and consequently of the whole Person.

This is but a little taste of the meanest things in this author; his whole oeconomy is thought by some to be a chain & most rational deductione of the most wonderful discoveries in divinity a great key to the Scriptures which cannot be truely understood without the assistance of that spirit wch did dictat them and the whole of that Author[.....] to the promoting of true Christianity & demonstrating the absolut necessity & reasonableness thereof.

I began to this letter about two hours after supper & must now goe to bed. I send this express to Appen for a schoolmaster to ye parish & my children wch Mr Duncan Stuart recommended to me. The Minister of Dunkeld & Caputh, worthy man, were about a fortnight agoe deprived by ye Council by ye instigation of ye presbytery we expect the like fate shortly. I command you and yours to ye grace of God expecting some return with ye bearer, I ame etc. Sock, October [...] \1701.

In the following letter Murray discusses Poiret's De Eruditore Triplica (Amsterdam, 1692), and his L'Oeconomie Divine (Amsterdam, 1687) (translated as The Divine Oeconomy: or an Universal System of the Works and Purposes of God towards Men etc. 6 vols, London, 1713), and various 'illuminated' persons, including Jeanne Guyon. It illustrates how Cheyne's immersion in theosophy and contemporary accounts of such 'illuminati' would have offered him a radically different approach to 'science' as that being pursued by many rigidly rationalist Newtonians. In particular it reveals a source for Cheyne's rationale for the abandonment of pure mathematics. The reference to mathematicians being 'deists' is probably a pointed reference to Pitcairne, whom Murray probably knew was in correspondence with Campbell over theology, Newtonian mathematics and medicine. Campbell also admired Craige's work on the calculus and Cheyne's iatro-mathematical theories. Murray's allusion in the letters to proofs of 'the immateriality of the soul', through the use of the calculus whereby 'ane infinit is quadrable wth a finit', is clearly a reference to Campbell communicating Craige and Cheyne's joint work on infinite divisibility as it was soon to appear in The Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion (1705). There are extant two very crabbed draft-letters to Craige and Cheyne which confirm Campbell's continued communication with them in England until at least 1708, and his enthusiasm to know their plans for publishing their work on the calculus.

It is not known if Cheyne had direct contact with Murray, but, as shown in Chapter 3, he was in close communication with Murray's associates amongst the Scottish 'mystics'. Campbell presumably discussed Poiret's 'True Theology', and its ethical bearing upon Newton's mathematics-based enquiry into nature in other letters to Cheyne and Craige. Murray's intriguing comments on the power of the uncorrupted imagination in the letter reproduced above, and his general critical attitude to the spiritual limitations and overambitious project of Newtonian science (after Poiret), clearly anticipates the concerns of Blake and later Romantic thinkers who dissented from a materialistic, mechanistic science which failed to see into 'the Archetype of Nature'. As noted, in Chapter 3, Boehme's dialectical theosophy directly influenced these later thinkers, in just the same way that it influenced Murray and his 'mystical' associates in the opening years of the century.

I have yours by the bearer, for which I thank you kindly and am glad to understand by him that you & your family are well: as allso from what you writ that you are taken wth Poiret's solid way in his book de Erud: It was indeed very dark to me at first neither could I ever bring my self to form a satisfactory & affecting idea of it until I perused his Aconomie wherin he deduces every thing ab origine & does it so fully & frequently that I could not escape the receiveing some impression which he abbreviats in his piece de Erud. were not able to make [before?]. I was alltogether a novice to things of that nature & which is worse prepossessed with a great many notions, which I must have unlearned before I could enter into such sentiments. However in the beginning & progress I mett wth many rubs wch thwarted my judgement & were very chokeing yet I resolved once to goe through cursorily & even in that method of reading the sequel happened still to give me such solutions of prior difficulties that in the end I rested satissfyed without ye second perusal wch I first intended; finding by it that there is a business of greater importance & indispensable necessity to be plied another way, for as Mr Smith says in the first of his select discourses, he that seeks Religion in books seeks the liveing among the dead. No says he, Intra te quaere Deum. We can never enough bless the divin providence that puts such helps in our hands for removeing the prejudices of our understandings but if after our reason is convinced we stick in the notional Theory of the Truth, we are the chief of sinners. Poiret's works are calculated for Scholars. I know none so proper for disposeing them to study & understand mystical Theology, which is the only true Theology, if you incline for his œconomy, you may have a loan of it from Ochtertyr, Dollarie or Monzie to whom I shall communicat yours as you desire.

As for the usefulness of mathematicks wth respect to mechanicks & consequently for this present life these things may be considered. 1. That we have allready more advantage to this purpose than we make good use of. 2. That the new Inventions & ingines are more applied to the prejudice of this life than the benefit of it, & will be so still so long as men's corruptions do encrease. 3. Little serves necessity, what is beyond it is dangerous & hurtful in this present state; yea Curiosity & Luxury are insatiable, no abundance can keep proportion wth the appetites & wants they beget. 4. There is a nearer and surer way for necessaries for Godlyness has the promises of this life hence. 5. The Rule is to seek first the Kingdom of God if a man observes that let him proceed to these Sciences & Arts, but I believe he' ll not think them worth his while his mind & heart will be taken up wth what infinitly excells them, even as far as eternity does time. This puts me in mind of a gentleman I met wth who has been these ten years at least upon one operation in algebra, he being of a good natural temper I used the freedom to ask him if that was not a great abuse of his time, he replied that if his design succeeded it might be usefull for posterity. I intimated to him something to the purpose above & further that thereby he was in the way of loseing a thing not only as to time but even in itself, better than all the temporal world.

As to the physicks & particularly medicin, I do not hear nor see by the effects what emprovements mathematicks have communicated. Some think that ane Introversion to the Archetyp of matter & all its powers is a better & safer way of comeing to ye knowledge of; natural things wherof there are instances enew not only ancient but modern as in Jacob Behmen a shoemaker, Dr Pordaige who died lately at London. The two van Helmonts father & son in short you see four ways in ye end of Erud. Solida whereby the solidly learned come to these things.

As to the problem of the Immateriality of the Soul wch is a great foundation of Religion, it seems very ingenious but I do not understand mathematicks, nor how ane infinit is quadrable wth a finit, however I pray that the blessing of God may be upon all them who level their learning to the promoting the essentials of religion in themselves first & then in others. Tho the premisses were erroneaous I should not contend if a man infers a good conclusion for his own particular & makes a good practical improvement of it. I hear that mathematicians of the greatest note are deists, & these do deny a future state so I do not conceive what notion they have of a soul or of God unless it be Lucretius's. I know some do justify the spending of their time in the study of Astronomy & Natural phylosophy because the same serves to make many and great discoveries to them of the adorable wisdom of the creator in his admirable works & many secrets wch are unknown to the vulgar & without their reach. This conduct were ye more sensible if they had first made use of what is obvious & at hand towards ye end they profess. The least grain of sand considered as brought from the state of nothing into that of b[.....] ser[ve] to excit us to the profoundest adoration of the creator as one Nicholas Herman a Cook & illiterat man, who died only since the Revolution, was struck by beholding a tree wth such an impression of God & his power that he became a most eminent Saint. I have his life & some of his

writings together wth Madam Guion's now [a]live in France, she has ye character of ane illuminated person [&] has writ on most of the Scriptures she suffered great persecutions from the clergy there, was a long time in the Bastille & is now at Liberty I have her explication of the Canticles, but never saw any thing human comparable to it.

The sum is when people go far abroad to purchase at great charges what they may have at home, it gives ground to suspect that they are acted wth some other motive as in the present case the gratifying of curiosity or some worse selfish design. It is to be considered that the essence and malignaty of sin lies in the turning the mind & heart from the Creator to the Creatur. That by our corrupt birth & evill habits this disorder is established in us. That Flesh & Blood cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven & I fear our most subtile & metaphysical sciences will be found so at last. That even we cannot attain to any solid peace of mind in this world wth out we mortify our vicious passions &. inclinations. Let us then first follow the studies wch contribute most to this, lest our time be spent before our main work is begun. what I have said in a hudley confusion does not contradict your letter nor is design'd for that end only I take occasion from it to communicat my thoughts freely my dear brother a man of goodness & prudence.

I left Colin a son of Mr Robert Campbell's a dying wth his mother on Saturday of a high spoted fever & ame goeing this day to see whether he is dead or alive he was ane excellent boy in ye 8th year of [his] age I give my best wishes to your family particularly your [ ] pat[ ] acquaintance and am,

your A.B & H.S. M.M.Murray

[1st] Dec[ember] 17[0]4

# Appendix II:

## Cheyne's poem: 'Platonick Love'

What e're ye eye discovers is a Ring
Where God and ye fair world are Circling,
Beauty begins the round, then love goes on
In an Eternal Revolution
And from this mutall consort we do prove
The Entertainm'ts of Platonick Love.
And call it Amity, a passion rare
Whose essence is made up of good and faire.
No starrs kind aspects by some secret Lye,
Not family begits this Harmony.
Not equall weight of humour, whose kind flood
Baths two free spirits in one well warm'd blood,
Not education nor opinion can,
Oblige Souls to meet in this Union:
Those are poor Cements, when love puts on wings
And flys in a chast flame, whose curled wings
Embrace ye hart suffering no lustfull staines
To mask it's pure and it's unsullied beams.
That piety is but mercenary grown,
Which fervent is to make great hates it's own
How poor's that soule wch. measur's all things best
By that great God of th' Times Self-Interest,
That Spirit which in Love for pleasure seeks,
Courting the Corrall bedded in faire cheeks,
Or gazing on the glory of an eye
Would force an Anchorit from his constancy,
Soon finds a change each busy minute may
Call up some sullen clowd to darke the day,
But generous souls who for no other end
Then virtue make Election of a friend.
Who look upon a fair mind with that sense
Might meet an Angells chast Intelligence
That have no sordid Impresse, no desire
But what was kindled at som Vestall fire.
When a sweet conversation pleases more
Than all the Complacenes rude Loves adore,
Who were they deify'd would yet ascend
In all the full Transportments of a friend
These are Platonicks, who because they lye
Hid in their Love, as in a Mysterie
When base Imposters cannot reach them fall
Under a Crime, or not being at all.
Blush sensuall Amorist at thy own flame
Call it no more affection, but thy shame,
Thou lovest just like a beast for appetite
And court'st thy lust instead of thy delight.
But on, fair Lover, let thy passions shew

Soul's have their beauty's and caresses too.
Which simple as their Essence, are not stain'd
With Triviall and loose freedoms, but maintain'd
By services so innocent and free,
It were Life to dye in that Captivity,
Where Prudence meet and Virtue, they can dresse
Friendship in it's own naturall Expresse
And shew the Amitys more pure and bright
Then are those flams which give ye glasses their light
Thus Angells looks and Love and in scarce known
Extatique raptures find perfection.
Thus Martyrs love and dye, serving in one
Obedient act, Faith and Devotion:
Thus Pilgrims love and kneel before ye shrine,
Thus Hermits make their Solitude divine,
Thus virtuous persons find a greater prize
In the Conformity of hearts than Eyes,
That stricks the soul with sweeter violence
Then all ye charms which prostitute ye sense:
Who crys this Love down, must needs oppress
Nature's first law, and Man's last happiness,
And may this first Imprecation fitted be
To punish his pridigious heresie,
Let him not Love, nor be belov'd by Any,
Let him ner'e be belov'd, and yet love Many.
Dr Cheyney

The above poem survives as a unique transcript in a commonplace book of the musicologist Dr Charles Burney (BL. MSS Cent. xvii, Burn. 390, f.8b, pg. 14). Its provenance is a mystery and there is no evidence that Cheyne published this or any other original serious poems. Stylistically it belongs more to the seventeenth than the eighteenth century, but this may be only the result of Cheyne's conservative religious interests rather than an indication of youthful composition. The poem's vocabulary is revealing. The composite word 'Self-Interest' stands out for its modernity. Cheyne seems to use it in the secondary sense provided in the OED: 'regard to, or pursuit, of, one's own advantage or welfare, esp. to the exclusion of regard for others'. The earliest example given for this usage is in Elistone's translation of Boehme of 1649, which is a very likely source for Cheyne's adoption. The second source is Baker's Sancta Sophia (1657), another work in circulation amongst Cheyne's quietist circle.

# Appendix III

## Satire from the Grub St Journal

'To be Prefix'd to the next edition of DR ARBUTHNOT'S BOOK OF ALIMENTS'
(from The Grub St Journal No. 86, 26 August, 1731)

PROVOC'K by CHEYNE'S silly books,
Writ meerly out of spite to cooks,
I resolv'd to shew that Man,
E're since this world of ours began,
Was always form'd to chew his vittle:
Else what a plague's the use of spittle?
Were the brave grinders in my head,
Plac'd only to crack nuts: champ bread?
Children indeed who have no teeth,
Old folks, whose gums can't master beef
From milk and broth may find relief.
But *see ye now* I'd rather stand [1]
To be by CHEYNE'S own rough hand
Cut clean as Abelard of old;
And trust in stories that are told,
Of finding boys in parsley-bed;
Than heed the whims of his fat-head.
For, to give my opinion plainly,
I think the action manly,
Which mortals use in propogation,
As that perform'd by mastication.
'Tis noble to devour an Ox;
'Tis fine to sheer, then eat the flocks;
To drain a lake, then catch the fish;
To put a wild boar in a dish;
To ransack woods tho' not for nuts,
There's pheasants, woodcocks, with their guts.
With gins and nets and various arts,
(Here chiefly Man displays his parts)
We conquer every living thing,
And then sit round them in a ring.
By Cooks and Cook-maids half-digested
Of twenty sorts (some unmolested)
I've eat at once,-----now for my book,
If into it's design you look,
You'll plainly find, that different men,
Ask different aliment---What then?
Why then 'tis certain you're not able
To gratify six guests at table,
Without you furnish at the least

---

[1] 'A common expression of the Doctor's'.

Nine dishes and those of the best,
At every course; three courses too
Must be allow'd, else it won't do.
For tho' here's one plays off the first;
If he went on but half so fast
He's nice, and loves to chew and taste;
And then your true right trencher
Men Will eat and talk, and eat again.
Mind then my precepts, eat all you can
And use this great prerogative of Man.

# Appendix IV:

## Note on Cheyne's House at Bath

Cheyne's precise address at London, apart from his post-restant address at 'The Old Man's' and 'The Plough Ball' Coffee Houses in 1708-9, have not emerged. From at least 1737 he owned an expensive house adjacent to the Globe Inn and Lodging House, in Monmouth Street, Bath. Entries in the Churchwarden's Accounts Book of Walcot Parish, Bath, for 1721-1757, read as follows (verbatim):

1735 Dr Cheyne 0-5-0 (no address given)
1736 no entry
1737 Doctor Chainy .Monmouth Street 0-10-0
1738 Dr Cheny 2-0-0
1739 Dr Cheny
1740 Dr Chainy
1742 Dr Cheny 1- 12-0
1743 Dr Cheny (not collected)
1746 occupier of the late Dr Cheny 0-8- 0
1749 Mrs Cheany by Mrs Tomling
1754 Mrs Chaeney
1756 Mrs Tomlin

This record was kindly brought to my notice by Trevor Fawcett, Secretary of the History of Bath Research Group, who obtained the information from Mr Colin Johnston, the Bath City Archivist, whom I thank for transcribing it on my behalf. The 'Mrs Cheany' of 1749 was probably Cheyne's widow (d. August 1752). The last entry probably refers to Peggy Cheyne or possibly her Aunt Isabelle (d. April 20th 1788, aged 82).

Monmouth Street was the name of the Bristol Road as it entered the old City of Bath. Whilst convenient for Cheyne's trips to see his brother-in-law at Bristol, and backing onto the King's Mead, it would have been a pleasant site at the edge of the city but the proximity of the Globe probably irritated the pious Cheyne. According to Walter Ison, in The Georgian Buildings of Bath: 1700-1830 (1948), (p. 33), it was built sometime after 1727, by the Bristol architect John Strahan, when the more famous John Wood was building the adjacent Queen's Square. As a professional rival Wood denigrated Strahan's work but his surviving houses suggest that Cheyne's would have been substantial and well designed. If the obscure figure of Strahan was related to Cheyne's publisher William Strahan, then the architect was also a kinsman of Cheyne's wife. The house was probably designed for the Cheynes to replace a perhaps older former lodging near the Baths. Monmouth St, was originally a desirable address but later developments to the north-east left it a relatively poor district by the 1770s. The area was badly damaged during the IInd. World War. By my orientations, Cheyne's house does not survive, but contemporary houses nearby suggest that Cheyne owned a handsome, double fronted, four storey house. Here we know he entertained patients such as Pope, Samuel Richardson, Chevalier Ramsay, and Lady Huntingdon. Some sent him gifts to furnish his home. On Christmas Eve 1732 he was

informing his patient, Baillie of Jerviswood (sent away by his physician on a curative Italian Tour) that

> your Marble Table is come and set up, they crush'd a little off one [of] the corners, but haveing the pieces I shall be able to soder them in some measure. I intend an Elegant superscription for it. It stands in my Best parlour, and all who have seen it say there was never such a thing at least in the West of England. I am naturally Vain and Worldly and read lectures on it to my Visitants. I will suspend my gratulatory speech until I have the honour of a personal meeting if I ever am so happy (Mellerstain).

Cheyne was very proud of his table (one of a pair), but he was not unaware of the discrepancy between his material wealth and his professed doctrines of spiritual transcendence for he adds, 'I fear my situation at present has much too much worldly Grandeur for one who ought and will be dead to it in a short time'. Cheyne also thanked Baillie for 'your Busto (I mean the Clay one) and so there will be more of you about my Habitation than there is of any other Mortal, only I shall expect to hear of you frequently' (Mellerstain) Like Pope, Cheyne made his house a sanctuary of intimate associations. His own portrait, painted in 1732 by the fashionable Dutch artist Van Diest, was probably commissioned to fill a place in the new house. Cheyne, who took a scientific interest in medical botany, also had a garden, which he described to Richardson as his 'Paradise', where the elderly physician accompanied his patients like Henrietta Gordon, the crippled daughter of the Earl of Aberdeen, on the therapeutic walks, 'without which there is no Health, Appetite, nor Spirits'. (Mullett, Letters, p. 118).

# Appendix V:

# Law's Letter To Cheyne, 1742

## Introductory Note on the Text

Below is my own transcript of a letter which only survives as a copy made anonymously into a late eighteenth-century manuscript notebook containing drafts of other letters to and from William Law. This notebook once belonged to Law's nineteenth-century biographer, William Walton, and is now amongst his papers in Dr William's Library, Golden Square, London (MS. 1123, 1.1.43, pp. 160-66.). Walton published part of the letter in his invaluable but confusingly arranged Notes for an Adequate Biography of William Law (Privately printed, 1889) (p. 46). It had earlier been printed, in part, in The Gentleman's Magazine 1782, (p. 392), by 'A Lover of Good Men of All Denominations' and 'taken from an authentic copy'. This was probably Law's disciple Thomas Langcake. He or his anonymous associate copied it into the surviving notebook under the following heading:

> Copy of a letter written by the Rev. Mr William Law in the year 1742 to the ingenious and celebrated physician, Dr George Cheyne, in answer to one from him. transcribed from a copy put into my hands by my pious and worthy friend, Mr Thomas Langcake, who obtained it from Mrs Stewart, daughter of Dr Cheyne. This was transcribed on January 17th, 1781.

This was a year before the publication in The Gentleman's Magazine. The fact that the original was in the possession of Cheyne's daughter is of interest as the only evidence that any papers survived Cheyne's request to Richardson that his 'trifling letters' and papers should all be burnt.

The letter from Law discusses two points raised by Cheyne in his lost letter of 30 March, 1742: firstly Marsay's worthiness as a mystical writer and suitability for translation and publication in English; and secondly Law's evidence for claiming, as he had just done in his Animadversions on Dr Trapp (1740) (pp. 201-2), that Newton derived the basic laws of attraction from Boehme and conducted alchemical experiments based upon the study of Boehme's works. I have discussed the significance of the comments on Marsay in Chapter 8 above. Law's claim concerning Newton's debt to Boehme became, as Donald Ault has remarked, a commonplace controversy 'in "occult" circles and has continued to the present day'. In his Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science (rev. 1932), Edwin Arthur Burt asserts that Boehme was 'read copiously' by Newton and thus strengthened Newton's 'conviction that the Universe as a whole is not mechanically but only religiously explicable' (p. 202). Stephen Hobhouse is oddly sceptical when he discusses the claim in his appended *Enquiry into the Influence of Jacob Boehme on Isaac Newton* in the second edition of his William Law: Select Mystical Writings (New York, 1948). Later that year, however, Arthur Wormhoult, ignoring Hobhouse, argued in an essay, *Newton's Natural Philosophy in the Behmenistic Works of William Law* (JHI 10, pp. 397-422) that although Boehme's triad is not strictly analogous to

Newton's three laws, they are at least qualitatively so when applied to celestial phenomena. Max Jammer asserts the continuance of this tradition in his Concepts of Force (1957), where he notes that 'even Lois T. More' accepted the claim until he retracted his view privately to Hobhouse. Newton's debt to Boehme is studied in depth by Betty J. T. Dobb's in her The Foundations of Newton's Alchemy (Cambridge, 1975). Donald Ault shows the relevance to literary studies in Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton (1974), and he rehearses some of the history of the debate in a footnote (p. 198-9). He makes some valuable comments on the controversy in the body of his study and argues that the debt is possible because, 'the paradoxical dynamic aspect of Newton's system lends itself rather readily to such an interpretation. Such a fact illustrates, as do the interpretations of Grabo, Beach and Priestly, that Newton's system has a strongly dynamic and unstable aspect in the constant decay and replenishment of force in the universe, which can be easily associated, by those who wish to do so, with Neo-Platonic or even "mystica;" cosmology' (Ibid..). We could add Cheyne to Ault's list for, whatever Cheyne may have believed about Newton's debt to Boehme, the Doctor's own work is a significant example of this tendency.

## Law's Letter to Dr Cheyne

Worthy Sir, I had the favor of yours of the 31 St March, it is but lately come to my hands, and I must answer it in half being just entering on a journey. When Sir Isaac Newton died, there were found among his papers, large extracts out of Jacob Behmen's works written with his own hand. this I have from undoubted authority: as also that in the former part of his life he was led into a search of the Philosopher's tincture from the same author. My vouchers are names well known & of greet esteem with you. --It is evidently plain that all that Sir Isaac has said, of the universality, Nature and effects of attraction, of the three first laws of Nature was not only said, but proved in its True Deepest ground by J. B. in his three first properties of Eternal Nature and from thence they are derived into his temporal outbirth --this added to the information above is I think a sufficient warrant for having said that Sir Isaac could have referred [resorted?] to Behmen for the True Ground.

I have read the Temongage d'un Enfant etc. [by Marsay], the first of the Discourses, I have read about three years or four years ago in the High Dutch. I was then acquainted wth. a German who knew the author very well; he told me he was an Academic of between forty & fifty yrs. of age, formed for great learning & much read in J. B. and the mystical divines. all which was too plain to be doubted of. I believe I need not tell you that I much admire this author, where he only treats of the nature, progress & perfection of the Spiritual Life; but I think it is a plain & unquestionable that he is a very fanciful writer, mixing ungrounded notions and flights with that part of Religion which should be freest from them; and therefore to me he appears an author, not at all fit for the Public perusal, and had been better only read or handed about in Manuscript.

Spirituality itself is such a contrarity both to learn'd and unlearn'd Human Nature, that nothing whimsical or conjectural should be connected with it. This gives Rationalists too great an opportunity of exploding it all as Chimerical, and makes even people well inclined to it, to be distrustful of it, & afraid of giving in to it whereas if the true spirituality of the Christian Life was kept within its own bounds, supported only by Scripture Doctrines, and the plain appearances of Nature and experience, Human reason would be strangely at a loss to know how to expose it.

I could allmost wish that we had no spiritual Books but those that have been wrote by Catholics, Not a line or a thought in Bertot wants to be excused, you have every instruction from him that a person come from Heaven could give you, and allways see that he is only teaching you the true height & depth of the Gospel ---The Philadelphians here in the last Century and their correspondents in Holland are a full proof of what I have observed above, The author and translators of the Temiogne etc. have adopted the Bourignian scheme. I need not tell you, that this scheme cannot maintain the most fundamental

articles of our redemption, the necessity of suffering death and sacrifice of our saviour etc. etc. -- Prejudice & fondness for singularities carried even the pious and learn's Poiret so far as to defend Bourignon in this & other matters as contrary to the Gospels-- I am in too much haste to say anything but in this broken way. I am with great sincerity of respect & esteem your most obliged & obedient servant.....P. S. from the authority above I can assure you that Sir Isaac was formerly so deep in J. B. that he together with Dr Newton his relation, set up furnaces and for several months were at work in quest of the tincture purely from what they conceive from him, Tis no wonder therefore that attraction with its inseparable properties which make in J. B. the first three properties of Eternal Nature should come to be the grand foundation of the Newtonian Philosophy. It is my conjecture that Sir Isaac declared so openly at first his total ignorance of the source and cause of attraction to prevent all suspicions of his being led into it from Behmen's doctrine, it is plain he knew the deep ground which B. had given of it --No one from B----- can know anything of the tincture, or the means & possibility of coming at it, without knowing and believing as B does, the grounds of Universal attraction-- and therefore Sir Isaac's silence, and ignorance of this ground must have been affected & for certain reasons which now can only be guessed at.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Manuscript Sources:


Bibliothèque de Genève: MS 605, 7 Cahier ff. 7-8; MS 1890, e, 5, p. 251 (Ballad)

Bodleian Library: Rawlinson MSS D. 832 (Roach Papers); Ballard MSS 24, f. 52; f. 149 (Hale to Charlett)

Bristol Central Library: MS B26063 (Catcott Letters); Uncatalogued Papers of John Heylyn; Diary of John Dyer (1752)

British Library: Manuscripts: Landsdowne MSS 15911, ff. 1, 30 and 33 and 23204, ff. 20, 26 and 39. (Keith to Lord Oxford); Sloane MSS 3198 (Gray to Pitcairne etc.); Sloane MS 4291 (Cheyne to Harley); Sloane MS 4039, f. 135 and 249 (Cheyne to Sloane); Sloane MS 4034 f. 317-48 (Cheyne to Sloane); MS 15911, (Oxely Letters)

Cambridge University: Keynes Manuscripts, 132. (Keill)

Dr William's Library, London: MS 186.4.(ii) (Pitsligo to Law)

Edinburgh Public Library: Edinburgh Room Archive: *Inventory of the Title Deeds of the Lands and Barony of Ingliston* (Xeroxed Acct. Book)

Edinburgh University Archive: Laing MSS, II, 238 (Cheyne to Richardson); Papers of Colin Cambell of Ardhatten; Matriculation Rolls (Volume I);MS Da. 2. i (Register of Users of the Library)

Huntington Library, California: Cheyne to Chandos (copies in Bath Reference Library)

Methodist Archive: John Rylands Library, Manchester: Whitfield-Wesley Correspondence

Mitchell Library, Glasgow: Slains MSS 562590 (Cunningham-Dutton Correspondence)

National Library of Scotland: Fettercairn Papers (Acc. 4796) (Cheyne to Ramsay etc); Acc. 8592 (Diary of Prophets, 1709)

Public Records Office: Prob II, 727, pp. 37-40 (1743) (Cheyne's Last Will and Testament)

Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases, Bath: Trustees Letter Book Vol. I and Loose Papers

Royal Society of London: Erskine Letters, Fond 120, Opis 1,

St Andrews University: Gregory MSS 247, f. 63.

Scottish Records Office: Bennet of Grubbet Papers GD. 205, fol. 34, Boxes 3&4 (Oliphant to Bennet); Roxburghe Muniments GD. 1100 (some brought from Floors Castle, kind permission of Duke of Roxburgh) (Roxburgh to Countess etc.); GD 248 (Cheyne to Deskford); Marchmont Papers GD 158, 1257, 1449/69/34, 1489 (Cheyne to Baillies etc); GD 52, 1435 (Cheyne to Forbes); GD 33, 64, 8 (Cheyne to Lord Aberdeen.)

Victoria and Albert Museum: Forster MSS XVI (Richardson Papers)

## Private Sources

Mellerstain Archive, (kind permission of Lord Haddington)

Uncatalogued Marchmont Papers (kind permission of Lady McEwen)

## The Works of George Cheyne

A New Theory of Continual Fevers wherein besides the Appearances of such fevers and the Method of Care, occassionally the structure of the glands and the manner of secretion, the operation of Purgative, Vomative and Mercurial Medicine are Mechanically Explain'd (H. Newman and J. Nutt, London, 1701)

Remarks on Two Late Pamphlets written by Dr Oliphant agianst Dr Pitcairn's Dissertations and the New Theory of Fevers, wherein besides an Explication of C.O. and his Interpreters, several other surprising Appearances of Nature are Mechanically acounted for (Edinburgh, 1702)

Fluxionum Methodus Inversa: sive Quantitatum Fluentium Leges Generaliores Ad Celeberrimum Virum Archibaldum Pitcairnium Medicinum Edinburgensem (J. J. Matthews and R. Smith, London, 1703)

A New Theory of Acute and Slow Continu'd Fevers...to which is prefix'd an Essay Concerning Improvements of the Theory of Medicine (George Strahan, London, 1703)

Rudimentorum Methodi Fluxionum Inversa Specimina: quæ responsionem continent animadversions Ab. de Moivre in Librum G.. Cheynæi (1705)

Philosophical Principles of Natural Religion: Containing the Elements of Natural Philosophy and the Proofs of Natural Religion arising from them (Strahan, 1705)

Philosophical Principles Religion, Natural and Reveal'd (Strahan, 1715)

Observations Concerning the Nature and due method of treating the Gout, for the use of my worthy friend Richard Tennison Esq; together with an account of the Nature and Qualities of the Bath Waters (Strahan and Leake, London and Bath, 1720)

An Essay of the True Nature and due Method of Treating the Gout, written for the use of Richard Tennison Esq; together with an account of the nature and quality of Bath-Waters, the manner of using them, and the diseases in which they are proper; as also of the Nature and Cure of most Chronical Distempers, not publish'd before (Strahan and Hammond, London and Bath, 1722)

An Essay of Health and Long Life ( Strahan and Leake, London and Bath, 1724)

Tractatus de Infirmorum Sanitate Tuenda Vitaque Producenda, Libro ejusdem Argumenti Anglice Edito Longe Auctior & Limatior (Strahan and Leake, London and Bath, 1725)

De Natura Fibrae, ejusque laxae sive resolutae morbis tractatus, nunc primum editus ( Strahan and Leake, London and Bath, 1726)

The English Malady: or, a Treatise of Nervous diseases of all kinds; as spleen, vapours, lowness of spirits, hypochondriacal and hysterical distempers...with the Author's Own Case at Large (Strahan, London, 1733) (facsimile reprint ed. by Roy Porter, Routledge, 1991)

An Historical Character of the Honourable George Baillie Esq. By G.C. M.D. F.R.S. (single sheet printed for the author by Richardson, 1738) (copy in NLS)

An Essay on Regimen: together with Five Discourses, Medical, Moral and Philsophical; serving to illustrate the principles and theory of philosophical medicine, and point out some of its moral consequences (Strahan and C. Rivington, London, 1740)

The Natural Method of Cureing the Diseases of the Body, and the Disorders of the Mind depending on the Body (Strahan, John and Paul Knapton, 1742)

## Primary sources

(Place of publication, London, unless otherwise stated)

Acta Eruditorium, (Leipsig 1710)

Addison, Joseph, The Spectator ed. by D. F. Bond, 6 volumes (1965)

Anon, A Refutation of a Short Answer to the Examination of Dr Pitcairne's Dissertations (Edinburgh, 1702)

----------A Short Answer to Two Lybels Lately Published against D.O. by Drs. Cheyne and Pitcairne (Edinburgh, 1702)

----------An Account of the Pretended Prophets, newly come from England, and their doctrine briefly considered (Edinburgh? 1709)

----------A Letter to Dr Cheyne Occasion'd by his Essay of Health and Long-Life by an F.R.S. (1724-5?)

----------Remarks on Dr Cheyne's Essay on Health and Long Life wherein some of the Doctor's Notorious Contradictions and False reasonings are laid open etc by a Fellow of the Royal Society (n.d. 1724-5?)

----------The Diseases of Bath: a Satire, unadorn'd with a Frontispiece (1737)

----------A Contrast; or an Antidote Against the pernicious principles disseminated in the Letters of the late Earl of Chesterfield etc 2 volumes (1791)

----------The Theory of Dreams in which an Inquiry is made into the Powers and Faculties of the Human mind, as they are Illustrated in the Most Remarkable Dreams Recorded in Sacred and Prophane History 2 vols, (1804)

Arbuthnot, John, An Essay Concerning the Nature of Aliments and the Choice of Them According to the Different Constitutions of Human Bodies (1731)

----------Essay Concerning the Effects of Air on Human Bodies (1733)

----------Miscellaneous Works of the Late Dr Arbuthnot 2 volumes (1770)

----------Arminian Magazine (1779-83)

Baillie,Lady, The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie: 1692-1733 ed. by Robert Scott Moncreif (Scottish Historical Society Edinburgh, 1911)

Baker, (Augustinian) Sancta Sophia or Directions for the Prayer of Contemplation 2 volumes (Douay, 1657)

The Bath Miscellany (Bath, 1740)

Baxter, Andrew, Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul wherein the Immateriality of the Soul is Evinced from the Principles of Reason and Philosophy (1733)

Bayne-[Kinnier], D. (M.D.), New Essay on the Nerves and the Doctrine of the Animal Spirits Rationally Considered, (London and Bath,1738)

Beattie, James, Essays: on the Nature and Immutability of Truth...on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition etc in Opposition to Spohistry and Scepticism (Edinburgh, 1776)

Bellini, Lorenzo, De Urinis et Pulsibus et Missione Sanguinis (Florence, 1683)

Bentley, Richard, The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism in Eight Sermons preached at the Lectures founded by the Honourable Robert Boyle: 1692 (1693)

Berkeley, George, The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne ed. by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, 11 volumes, (1948-57)

Biographia Britannica, ed. by A. Kippis (1760-62; and 2nd ed. 1784)

Blackmore Richard, A Treatise of the Spleen and Vapours, or Hypochondriacal and Hysterical Affections (1725)

Blair, Robert, The Grave (1743)

Borelli, Giovanni, De Motu Animalium, 2 vols (Rome, 1680-1)

Boswell, James, Life of Johnson, ed. by G. B. Hill and L. F. Powell, 6 volumes (Oxford, 1934)

----------Boswell's Column ed. by Margery Bailey (1951)

----------Boswell in Holland: 1763-1764 ed. by Frederick A. Pottle (1952)

----------The Ominous Years: 1774-1776 ed. by Charles Ryskamp and Frederick A. Pottle (1963)

----------Boswell in Extremes: 1776-1778 ed. by Charles McC. Weis and Frederick A. Pottle (1971)

[Bower, Thomas,] A Letter from Dr James Walkinshaw to Sir Robert Sibbald

The Bristol Oracle and Weekly Intelligencer No 8 (Saturday, April 16th, 1743)

Browne, Peter, Things Divine and Supernatural Concieved by Analogy with Things Natural and Human (Dublin, 1732) ('Divine Analogy')

Burnet, Thomas, De Statu Mortuorum et Resurgentium Liber (privately printed for Dr Richard Mead, 1721) (translated by Dennis as A Treatise Concerning the State of Departed Souls before, at and after the Resurrection, 1730)

----------The Theory of the Earth (1684)

Burnet, Gilbert, History of His Own Times ed. by his son Thomas Burnet, 2 volumes (1823)

Burton, Robert, Anatomy of Melancholy (first published, 1621), ed. by Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York, 1955)

Byfield, Timothy, Directions Tending to Health and Long-Life (1717)

----------A Closet-Piece: Experimental Knowledge of the Ever-Blessed God...according to the Revelation of the Holy Scriptures (1721)

Byrom, John, Enthusiasm: a poetical essay. (1751)

----------An Epistle to a Gentleman In the Temple (1749)

Cadogan, William, Dissertation on the Gout (1771)

Carmichael, Gershom, Synopsis Theologiae Naturalis (Edinburgh, 1729)

Cave, William, Primitive Christianity: or the Religion of the Ancient Christians in the First Ages of the Gospel 2 volumes (1673)

Chamberlain, Hugh, Characters at the Hot-Well, Bristol in September and at Bath in October, 1723 (1724)

The Champion

Chandler, Mary, A Description of Bath: a Poem humbly inscribed to the princess Amelia (Bath and London, 1734)

Cockburn, John, A Letter from John Cockburn D.D. to his friend in London; giving an Account why other Narratives about Bourignianism [sic] are not published, and answering some reflections passed upon the last (1698)

----------Bourignianism [sic] Detected, or the Delusions and Errors of Antonia Bourignon, which may serve for a Discovery of all other Enthusiastical Impostures: Narrative I (1698)

Correspondence of Baillie of Jerviswood, 1702-1708 (Edinburgh, Bannatyne Club, 1842)

Craige, John, Theologiae Christianae Principia Mathematica (1699)

----------*Craig's Rules of Historical Evidence 1699*

De Moivre, Abraham, Animadversiones in D.Georgii Cheynaei tractatum de Fluxionum Methodus Inversa (1704)

DeFoe, Daniel, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain ed. by P. Rogers (Harmonsworth, Penguin, 1972)

Derham, W., The Artificial Clock-Maker: Physico Theology (1696)

----------Astro-Theology (1715)

[Erskine, Robert, (M.D.)] Letters and Documents relating to Robert Erskine, Physician to Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, 1677-1720 ed. by Rev. R. Paul (Miscellany of the Scottish History Society Volume 3, No 44), 37--430

[Fielding, Henry,] The Tryal of Colley Cibber Comedian...for writing a book intitled an Apology for his Life...Together with An Indictment exhibited against Alexander Pope ...for not exerting his

talents at this Juncture and The Arraignment of George Cheyne, Physician at Bath for the Philosophical, Physical and Theological Heresies, uttered in his Last Book on Regimen (1740)

----------The History of Tom Jones ed. by Fredson Bowers (Oxford, 1974)

Fletcher, Andrew (of Saltoun), An Account of a Conversation Concerning the Right Regulation of Governments for the Common Good of Mankind etc. (Edinburgh, 1704)

----------Selected Political Writings aand Speeches ed. by David Daiches (Edinburgh, 1979)

Fog's Weekly Journal (Dec., 1733)

Forbes, Alexander (Baron Pitsligo), Essays Moral and Philsophical on Several Subjects (1734)

----------Thoughts Concerning Man's Condition with a Biographical Sketch of the Author by Lord Medwyn, and a review by Sir Walter Scott (4th edition, Edinburgh, 1854)

[Forbes Family], The House of Forbes ed. by A&H Taylor, (IInd Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1937)

Freke, William, The New Jerusalem: or, the Holy Methods of Divine Prediction (1702)

----------The Great Elijah's Ist Appearance (1709)

Freke, John, An Essay to Shew [sic] the Cause of Electricity (1748)

----------Treatise on the Nature and Property of Fire (1752)

Garden, George, An Apology for M. Antonia Bourignon (1699)

----------(translator) Opera Johannis Forbesii 2 volumes (Amsterdam, 1702-3)

Garden, James, Comparative Theology or, The True and Solid Grounds of Pure and Peaceable Theology Proposed in a University Discourse (Ist edition in English, 1700), (edition used Bristol 1756, with Preface by John Robertson M.D.)

Gay, John, Poetry and Prose ed. by Vinton A. Dearing and Charles E. Beckwith, 2 volumes (Oxford, 1974)

The Gentleman's Magazine (38)

George Hickes, The Spirit of Enthusiasm Exorcised (1709)

Gerhardt, C. I., Die Philsophischen Schriften von G. W. Leibniz, 7 vols (Berlin, 1875-90, reprinted Hildesheim, 1960)

Goldsmith, Oliver, The Collected Works ed. by Arthur Freidman, 5 volumes (Oxford, 1966)

Graves, Richard, The Festoon: or a Select Collection of Epigrams, Panygyrical, satyrical, Amorous, Moral, Humerous, Monumental (1766)

----------The Invalid with the Means of Enjoying health by a Nonagenarian (1804)

----------The Spiritual Quixote or the Summer's Ramble of Mr Geoffrey Wildgoose ed. by (first published, 1773), ed. by C. Whibley (1926)

[Greenhill, W. A.,] The Life of Dr George Cheyne (Oxford, 1856)

Gregory, David, David Gregory, Isaac Newton and their Circle, ed. by W. G. Hiscock, (Oxford, 1937)

The Grub St. Journal Nos 8, 86, 156, 360, & 371 (1730-36)

The Guardian No. 126

Guyon, Jeanne Marie, Recueil de Divers Triatez de Théologie Mystique, qui entrent dans la...dispute du quiétisme etc., (Cologne, 1699)

----------Opuscules Spirituels (first published 1704) ed. by Pierre Poiret (Cologne, 1722)

----------Poésies et Cantiques Spirituels ed. by Pierre Poiret, 4 volumes (Cologne, 1722)

Halyburton, Thomas, Oratio Inauguralis Habita Andreapoli in Scholis Collegi Mariani Borealibus, quinto Calendas Maii, 1710 In qua, post exhibitam Taionem suscepti Muneris, Examinatur Schedula nupera, cui Titulus, Epistola Archimedis ad Regem Gelonem etc. (Edinburgh, 1714)

----------*The Memoirs of Thomas Halyburton* in The Works of Thomas Halyburton, with an Essay on His Life and Writings by R. Burns (1835)

The Harleian Miscellany II (1754)

Hartley, David, Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty and his Expectations (1749)

Henderson, G. D., (editor) Mystics of the North East including i. Letters of James Keith M.D., and others to Lord Deskford; ii Correspondence Between Dr George Garden and James Cunningham ( Third Spalding Society, Aberdeen, 1934)

Hiches, George (See previous pg. under 'George')

Hildrop, John, Reflections on Reason (1722, edition used 3rd 1729)

Historical Manuscripts Commision Report of the Manuscripts of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings Esq., 4 volumes (1928-47)

----------Report on the Laing Manuscripts preserved in the University of Edinburgh 2 volumes (1925)

----------The Manuscripts of his Grace the Duke of Portland 10 volumes (1891-1932)

History and Theory: Studies in the Philosophy of History 4 ('s Gravehage, 1964)

Honeyman, Andrew, Bourignonism Display'd in a Discovery...of Sundry Gross Errors maintain'd by G[eorge] G[arden the Author of the Preface to the English reader etc. (Aberdeen, 1710)

Hooke, Nathaniel, Roman History, from the Building of Rome to the Ruin of the Commonwealth 4 volumes (1738-1771)

Hume, David, Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding (1748)

----------The Natural History of Religion; Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion ed. by A. W. Colver and J. V. Price (Oxford, 1976)

Hutcheson, Francis, An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue (1725)

James Robert, Medical Dictionary 3 volumes (1743-5)

Johnson, Samuel, A Dictionary of the English Language 2 volumes (1755-6)

----------The Letters of Samuel Johnson ed. by R. W. Chapman, 3 volumes, (Oxford, 1952, revised 1984)

----------The Letters of Samuel Johnson (The Hyde Edition) ed. by Bruce Redford, 3 volumes thus far (Oxford, 1992)

Johnston, J., A Reply to Dr Oliphant's Refutation of the Short Answer (Edinburgh, 1702)

----------A Short Answer to a Late Pamphlet against Doctor Pitcairn's [sic] Dissertations (Edinburgh, 1702).

----------A Refutation of Dr Oliphant's Defence (Edinburgh, 1699)

Jurieu, Pierre, Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies, (1687)

Keble, John, The Life of the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas Wilson, D. D., Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man 7 volumes (Oxford, 1863)

King, William, Anecdotes of His Own Times (1818)

Law, William, The Works of the Reverend William Law, M.A 9 volumes (1762, privately reprinted for G. Moreton, Setley, Hants., 1892-3)

Lawrence (Brother), Devotional Tracts Concerning the Prescence of God (1724)

Le Clerc (editor), Bibliothèque Ancienne et Moderne Vols 3 & 7 (Amsterdam, 1715-17)

Leade, Jane, The Heavenly Cloud Now Breaking, (1681; 1701)

----------The Enochian Walks with God (1694)

----------Three Messages to the Philadelphian Society (1696-8)

----------A Fountain of Gardens, 3 volumes, (1696-1701),

----------The Signs of the Times: forerunning the Kingdom of Christ, and evidencing when it is to come (1699)

Lee, Francis, State of the Philadelphian Society (1697)

----------[as 'Philadelphus'], The State of the Philadelphian Society: or the grounds of their proceedings consider'd in answer to a Letter from Philalethes, upon occasion of the Theosophical Transactions etc. (1697)

----------Dissertations, Theological, Mathematical, and Physical 2 volumes (1752)

----------*The History of Montanism* (published in Hickes, G. 1710)

Locke, John, Thoughts Concerning Education (1693) (see Axtell)

----------Essay Concerning Human Understanding ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford, 1975)

The London Magazine

Mackenzie, George (Earl of Cromartie), A Bundle of papers, partly Self-Evident, partly Problematick raised from Occasional Meditations (privately printed , Edinburgh?, 1705, copy in NLS)

Mandeville, Bernard, Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysteric Passions (1711)

Marsay, Hector, Discourses on the Spiritual Life, translated from the French, to which is Prefix'd a Letter giving some Account of the Author: with remarks on the writers commonly called Mystick or Spiritual (Edinburgh, 1749)

Mead, Richard, Mechanical Account of Poisons (1702)

----------De Imperio Solis ac Lunae in Corpora Humana et Morbis inde Oruindis (1704)

Mede, Joseph, Clavis Apocalyptica (first published, 1627) (1649)

Medical Essays and Observations, 2 volumes (Edinburgh 1735, 1737)

Metternicht, Wolf von (Baron), Fides et Ratio, Collatae, ac suo utraque loco redditae adversus Principia Joannis Lockii etc. editit & praefatus est Petrus Poiret (Amsterdam, 1708)

----------Faith and Reason Compared, shewing that the Divine Faith and Natural Reason proceed from two different and distinct Principles in Man, Against the notions and errors of the modern rationalists etc. translated and ed. by D.C.H. (1713)

Middleton, Patrick, An Inquiry into the Inward Call of the Holy Ministry ed. by his son John Middleton (Cambridge, 1741, Bristol 1743)

Morgan, Thomas M.D., Philsophical Principles of Medicine in Three Parts (enlarged 2nd edition, 1730)

----------A Philosophical Dissertation Upon Death Composed for the Consolation of the Unhappy by A. Radicate Count di Pesserano, translated by John, or rather Thomas Morgan (1732)

----------The Mechanical Practice of Physick: in which the Specific Method is examin'd and exploded, and the Bellini Hypothesis of Animal Secertion and Muscular Motion refuted (1735)

----------A Letter to Dr Cheyne Ocassion'd by Dr Robinson's Letter to Him in Defence of his Treatise of the Animal Oeconomy Against Dr Morgan's Objections in his Mechanical Practice (1738)

Mullett, Charles F. (editor), The Letters of Dr George Cheyne to the Countess of Huntingdon (Huntingdon Library, San Marino, 1940)

----------The Letters of Doctor George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson (1733-1743) (The University of Missouri Studies, 18, Columbia 1943)

Newton, Isaac, Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John (1733)

----------Correspondence of Sir Isaac Newton ed. by Turnbull, H.W., Scott, J.F., and Hall, A.R. 7 vols. (1959-1973)

----------The Opticks (4th edition, 1730, reprinted New York, 1952)

Newton, Richard, Pluralities Indefensible (1740)

Nichols, John, Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century 6 volumes (1812-4)

Oliphant, Charles, A Short Answer to Two Lybels Lately Published Against D.O. by Drs. Cheyne and Pitcairn [sic] (Edinburgh ?, 1702)

----------A Short Discourse to Prove the Usefullness of Vomiting in Fevers by Plain reasoning and the Authority of the best Physicians, Ancient and Modern (Edinburgh, 1699)

Penton, Stephen, New Intructions to the Guardian (1694)

Pepys, S., The Private Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Samuel Pepys: 1679-1703 ed. by J. R. Tanner, 2 volumes (1926)

Perry, Charles M.D., A View of the Levant, particularly of Constantinople, Syria, Egypt and Greece (1743)

Philosophical Transactions of the Philadelphian Society (1697)

*Pillo-Tisanus* An Epistle to Ge--ge Ch--ne M.D. F.R.S. Upon His Essay of Health and Long Life (for J. Roberts, 1725 ?)

The Physiological Library, Begun by Mr Steuart, and some of his students of natural philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, April 2, 1724; and augmented by some gentlemen; and the students of natural philosophy, December 1724 (Edinburgh, 1725)

Pitcairne, Archibald, Epistola Archimedis ad Regem Gelonem, Albae Gracae Reperta (Amsterdam, 1688)

----------Dissertationes Medicae, quarum multae nunc primum prodeunt (Edinburgh, 1713)

----------The Works of Dr Archibald Pitcairne wherein are Discover'd the true Foundation and Principles of the Art of Physick etc....Done from the Latin original [by George Sewell and John T. Desagu.liers] with some account of his own life (1715)

----------Selecta Poemata (Edinburgh, 1727)

----------The Assembly, ed. by T. Tobin (Lafayette, Indiana, 1972)

----------The Best of our Owne: The Letters of Archibald Pitcairne 1652-1713 ed. W. T Johnston (Edinburgh, 1979)

Pocock, Edward (senior), The Theological Works etc. 2 volumes (1740)

Poiret, Pierre, De Eruditore Triplica Solida etc (Amsterdam, 1692)

----------(and James Garden), Theologiae Purae ac Pacificae Vera ac Solida Fundamenta, sive Theologia Comparativa (Amsterdam, 1702)

----------True Principles of the Christian Education of Children (Edinburgh, 1695)

----------Biblioteca Mysticorum selecta etc. (Amsterdam, 1708)

----------The Divine Oeconomy: or an Universal System of the Works and Purposes of God towards Men etc (first published in French, Amsterdam, 1687), English translation, 6 vols, (London, 1713)

Pope, Alexander, The Prose Works: Volume II ed. by Rosemary Cowler (Oxford, 1986)

----------The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, general editor John Butt, 11 volumes (London and New Haven, Conn., 1937-1983)

Pordage, Samuel, Theologia Mystica (1683)

Porterfield, William, A Treatise on the Eye: the Manner and Phaenomena of Vision 2 volumes (1759)

Prevost D'Exiles, Antoine, The Dean of Coleraine (1742)

Ramsay, Allan, Works general editor Burns Martin, 6 volumes (Scottish Texts Society, Edinburgh, 1945-74)

Ramsay, Andrew, Life of Francois de Salignac De La Motte Fénélon Archbishop of Cambray (1723)

----------The Travels of Cyrus, with a Discourse on Mythology (Paris 1727, and London 1739)

----------Some Few Poems (Edinburgh, 1728)

----------A Plan of Education (1732) (edition used Glasgow, 1742)

----------The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion unfolded in a Geometrical Order 2 volumes (Glasgow, 1748-9)

Ray, J., The Wisdom of God (first published 1691, enlarged 1704)

----------Physico-Theological Discourses (first published 1693; revised 1713)

Redwood, John, Reason, Ridicule and Religion (1976)

Richardson, Samuel, The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson ed. by Anna L. Barbauld, 6 volumes (1804)

----------Selected Correspondence ed. by J. Carroll (Oxford, 1964)

----------Clarissa 4 volumes (Everyman Library 1932)

----------Clarissa or the History of a Young Lady ed. by Angus Ross (Harmondsworth, 1985)

Ritson, Joseph, An Essay on the Abstinence from Animal Food as a Moral Duty (1802)

Roach, Richard, The Great Crisis, or the Mystery of the Times and Seasons Unfolded (1727)

----------The Imperial Standard of Messiah Triumphant Coming Now in the Power and Kingdom of his Father with His Saints on Earth (nd but 1727-8)

Robinson, Bryan, A Treatise of the Animal Oeconomy (Dublin, 1732)

----------A Letter to Dr Cheyne Containing an Account of the Motion of Water through Orifices and Pipes; and an Answer to Dr Morgan's Remarks on Dr Robinson's Treatise of the Animal Oeconomy (Dublin, 1735)

Robinson, Nicholas, A New Theory of Physick and Diseases founded on the Principles of the Newtonian Philosophy (1725)

----------A New System of the Spleen, Vapours and Hypochondriack Melancholy (1729)

Roe, Thomas, Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe, in his Embassy to the Ottoman Porte, from the Year 1621-1628 Inclusive ed. by Samuel Richardson (1740)

Salignac de la Mothe, Fénélon, Instructions for the Education of a Daughter translated by G. Hickes (1707)

----------Explication des Maximes des Saints sur la Vie Intérieure (Paris, 1697)

----------Dissertation on Pure Love (1735)

Scougall, Henry, The Life of God in the Soul of Man (1677)

Seafield Letters, (Publications of the Scottish History Society) 2nd Series, XI (1915)

Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper (3rd Earl of), Letter Concerning Enthusiasm (1704)

----------Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times (1711)

Shiels, Robert [as 'Theophilus Cibber'], Lives of the Poets of Great-Britain and Ireland 6 volumes (1753)

Smollett, Tobias, Humphry Clinker ed. by Angus Ross (Harmondsworth, 1967)

Spence, Joseph, Observations, Anecdotes and Characters of Books and Men Collected from Conversation ed. by James M. Osborn, 2 volumes (Oxford, 1966)

Stanhope, Philip Dormer (4th earl of Chesterfield), The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope etc. ed. by Bonamy Dobree, 6 volumes (1932)

Sterne, Laurence, The Letters of Laurence Sterne ed. by Lewis P. Curtis (Oxford, 1935)

----------Tristram Shandy ed. by J. A. Work (New York, 1940)

Strother, E., An Essay on Sickness and Health wherin are Contain'd all Necessary Cautions and Directions for the Regulation of Diseas'd and Healthy Persons; .in which Dr Cheyne's Mistaken opinions in his Late Essay, are Occasionally taken Notice of (1725)

Stuart, Gilbert, *A Memoir of Dr Archibald Pitcairne*, The Edinburgh Magazine and Review , I, (April, 1774)

Stukeley, William, Of the Spleen its Description and History (1723)

----------The Letters and Diaries of William Stukeley, 3 volumes (The Surtees Society, 1880-85)

Swift, Jonathan, The Prose Works general editor Herbert Davis, 14 volumes (Oxford, 1939-68)

Temple, Sir William, Miscellanea, 3 volumes (1680; 1692 and 1702)

----------Works 3 volumes (1757)

Thomson, James, James Thomson (1700-1748) Letters and Documents ed. by Alan Dugald McKillop (Kansas, 1958)

----------The Seasons ed. by James Sambrook (Oxford, 1981) ( Clarendon Press).

Thrale, Hester Lynch, Thraliana: The Diary of...Mrs Piozzi ed. by K. C. Balderston, 2 volumes (Oxford, 1942)

Trapp, Joseph, Discourse of the Nature, Folly, Sin and Danger of Being Righteous Overmuch (1739)

----------A Reply to Mr Law's Earnest and serious Answer (as it is called) to Dr Trapp's Discourse (1741)

Tryon, Thomas, The Knowledge of A Man's Self The Surest Guide to the worship of God, and the good government of the Mind and Body (1704)

Wanley, Nathaniel, Wonders of the Little World or a General History of Man: displaying the various Faculties, Powers, and Defects of the Human Body and Mind etc. 2 volumes (New Edition, 1806)

Warburton, William, A Short Account of the Nature, Rise and Progress of the General Hospital at Bath (1743)

Ward, Richard, Life...of Dr Henry More (1710)

Watts, Isaac, The Improvement of the Mind:or a Supplement to the Art of Logick (1741)

[Webster, William ed.], The Weekly Miscellany: Giving an Account of the Religion, Morality and Learning of the Present Times: by Richard Hooker [i.e. Webster] of the Temple Esq 2 volumes (For the Author, 1736; 1738)

----------An Account of the Life and Writings of the Celebrated Dr Pitcairne, (Edinburgh, 1781)

Wesley, Charles, The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley ed. by T. Jackson, 2 volumes (1849)

Wesley, John, The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley A.M. ed. by Nehemiah Curnock, 8 volumes (1909)

----------The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. ed. by J. Telford, 8 volumes, (Epworth Press, 1931)

----------Primitive Physick; or an Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases (first published, 1747), ed. by A. Wesley-Hill (Epworth Press, 1960)

Whiston, William, Scripture Politicks (1707)

White, Jeremiah, The Restoration of All Things (1712)

Whytt, Robert, Observations on the Nature, Causes and Cure of those Disorders which are Commonly called Nervous, Hypochondriac, or Hysteric: to which are prefix'd some remarks on the sympathy of the nerves. (Edinburgh, 1765)

Wilkins, John, Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion (1675)

Wilson, Thomas (Bishop), The Knowledge and Practice of Christianity made easy to the Meanest Capacities: or, An Essay Towards an Instruction for the Indians (1740)

Wilson, Thomas, (Bishop) Wilson, Thomas, Distilled Spiritous Liquors the Bane of the Nation (1736)

Wood, John (the elder), An Essay towards a Description of Bath (Bath 1742, edition used 2nd, enlarged 1749)

Wollston, William, Religion of Nature Delineated (1724)

Wotton, William, Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning, to which is now added a Defence Therof etc (1705)

Young, Edward, Two Epistles to Mr Pope, Concerning the Authors of the Age (1730)

----------The Correspondence of Edward Young 1683-1765 ed. by Henry Pettit (0xford, 1971)

----------Night Thoughts ed. by Stephen Cornford (Cambridge, 1989)

## Secondary sources

Abrams, M. H., Natural Supernaturalism (1971)

----------The Correspondent Breeze: Essays in English Romanticism (New York, 1984)

Aitken, G. A., The Life and Works of John Arbuthnot (Oxford, 1892)

Anon, The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, 2 volumes, (1839, 1840)

Appleby, J. H., *Archibald Pitcairne Re-Encountered: A Note on his Manuscript Poems and Printed Library Catalogue* The Biblioteck Vol. 12, 6 (1986)

Arbuthnot, Ada J., Memoirs of the Arbuthnot's of Kincardineshire (1920)

Atto, Clayton, *The Society for the Encouragement of Learning*, The Library, 4th Series, 19 (1938-9), 263-88

Ault, Donald, Visionary Physics: Blake's Response to Newton (1974)

Axtell, J. L., The Educational Writings of John Locke (Cambridge, 1968)

Babb, Lawrence, *The Cave of Spleen* The Review of English Studies, Vol. 12, No. 46 (1936) 165-176

Barfoot, M., *Hume and the Culture of Science in the Early Eighteenth Century*, Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, ed.by M. A. Stewart (Oxford, 1989)

Barnes, B and S. Shapin, Natural Order: Historical Studies of Scientific Culture (1979)

Barry, Jonathan, *Piety and the Patient: Medicine and Religion in Eighteenth Century Bristol*, Patients and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Pre-Industrial Society ed. by Roy Porter, (Cambridge, 1985), 145-177

Bartel, R., *Suicide in Eighteenth-Century England: the Myth of a Reputation* Huntington Library Quarterly 23 (1959), 145-55

Bechler, R., *"Triall by what is contrary": Samuel Richardson and Christian Dialectic*, in Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence ed. by Valerie Grosvenor Myer (1986)

Bedoyére, M. de la, The Archbishop and the Lady: the story of Fenélon and Madame Guyon, (1956)

Beer, J. B., Coleridge the Visionary, (1959)

[Berkeley, George,] *Bishop Berkeley's Gift of Books* The Yale University Library Gazette 8, no.1 (1933), 1-42

Bower, Andrew, The History of the University of Edinburgh 2 volumes (Edinburgh, 1817)

Bowles, G., *Physical, Human, and Divine Attraction in the Life and Thought of George Cheyne*, Annals of Science, 31 (November, 1974), 473-488

----------*The Place of Newtonian Explanation in English Popular Thought 1687-1727* (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Cambridge, 1977)

Boyce, Benjamin, The Benevolent Man: A Life of Ralph Allen of Bath (Harvard, 1967)

Bracken, Harry M., *Bishop Berkeley's Messianism*in Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought 1650-1800 (Clark Library Lectures 1981-1982 ed. by R. Popkin (Brill; Leiden, New York etc., 1988)

Brantley, Richard, Locke, Wesley and the Method of English Romanticism (University of Florida, Gainesville, 1984)

Bredvold, L. I., The Natural History of Sensibility (Detroit, 1962)

Brewster, David (Sir), Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton 2 volumes (Edinburgh, 1855, reprinted in 1 volume, The Sources of Science 14, New York and London, 1965)

Brissenden, R. F., Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade (1974)

Brown, Theodore M., *From Mechanism to Vitalism in Eighteenth-Century Physiology* Journal of the History of Biology 7 (1974), 179-216

Bruce, Donald, Radical Dr Smollett (1964)

Bulloch, J. M., A History of the University of Aberdeen, 1495-1895 (1895)

----------A Pioneer of Inoculation: Charles Maitland (Aberdeen, 1930)

----------*An Aberdeen Falstaff: Dr George Cheyne, our Double M.D.*, (Aberdeen University Library Bulletin 7, and offprint, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 1930)

Burton, John Hill, The Life and Correspondence of David Hume (Edinburgh, 1846)

Byrd, Max, Visits to Bedlam, Madmen and Literature in the Eighteenth Century (South Carolina, 1974)

[Byrom, John,] A Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Byrom Esq. M.A., F.R.S. (Privately Printed, n.p., 1848)

----------The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byrom ed. by Richard Parkinson, 4 volumes in 2 (Manchester, 1854-7) (Chetham Society Remains, Vols 32; 34; 40 & 44)

----------The Poems of John Byrom ed. by Adolphus W. Ward, 3 volumes in 5, (Manchester, 1894-1912) (Chetham Society Remains, New Series 19, Vols 29-35 & 70)

----------Selections from the Journals and Papers of John Byrom-Poet, Diarist Shorthand Writer 1691-1763, ed. by Henri Talon (1950)

Chambers, Robert, Traditions of Old Edinburgh , (Edinburgh 1824, reprinted 1967)

Chesterfield, 4th earl of, (see Stanhope)

Cheyne, John, Essays on the Partial Derangement of the Mind in Supposed Connection with Religion (Dublin, 1843)

Cheyne, A. Y., The Cheyne Family in Scotland (Eastbourne, 1931)

Church, Leslie E., More About Early Methodist People (1949)

Clarke, Edwin, *The Doctrine of the Hollow Nerve in the 17th and 18th centuries*, in Medical, Science and Culture, ed. by Lloyd G. Stevenson and R. B. Multhauf, (Baltimore, 1968)

Cole, Rosalie, Light and Enlightenment (Cambridge, 1957)

Coleridge, S. T., The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge ed. by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 10 volumes (Princeton, 1979-83)

The Concise Scots Dictionary (Aberdeen, 1985)

Crane, R. S., *Suggestions Towards the Geneaology of the "Man of Feeling"* The Idea of the Humanities and other Essays (Chicago, 1967), i, 188-213

Cunningham, Andrew, *Sir Robert Sibbald and Medical Education, Edinburgh, 1706* Clio Medica 13 , 2 (19 ), 135-161

----------*Sydenham versus Newton: the Edinburgh Fever Dispute in the 1690s between Andrew Brown and Archibald Pitcairne*, Theories of Fever from Antiquity to the Enlightenment, ed. by W. F. Bynum and V. Nutton, (Medical History, Supplement No 1, 1981), 71-98

----------*Medicine to Calm the Mind* in Patients and Practitioners ed. by Andrew Wear and Roger French (Cambridge, 1989)

Dallimore, Arnold, George Whitfield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth-Century Revival 2 volumes (Edinburgh, 1980)

Davis, J. H., Fénelon, (Boston, 1979)

Davis, Joe Lee, *Mystical versus Enthusiastic Sensibility* Journal of the History of Ideas 4 (1943), 301-319

Dictionary of National Biography

Domson, C. A., *Nicholas Fatio de Duillier and the Prophets of London: An Essay in the Historical Interaction of Natural Philosophy and Millennial Belief in the Age of Newton*, (unpublished Ph.D. thesis,Yale, 1972).

Donaldson, George, *Scottish Conservative North in Seventeenth Century Scotland*, Scottish Church History (Edinburgh, 1985)

Doody, Margaret Anne, A Natural Passion: a Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson (Oxford, 1974)

Doughty, O., *The English Malady in the Eighteenth Century* The Review of English Studies, II, 7 (1926), 256-69

Duncan, Douglas, Thomas Ruddiman: a Study in Scottish Scholarship of the Early Eighteenth-Century , (Edinburgh, 1965)

Duncan Eaves, T. C. and Kimpel B. D., Samuel Richardson: a Biography (Oxford, 1971)

Dussinger, John A., The Discourse of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century Fiction (The Hague, 1974)

Dwyer, John, Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland (Edinburgh, 1987)

Eberwein, R., *Samuel Johnson, George Cheyne, and the "Cone of Being"*, in Journal of the History of Ideas, 36 (1975), 153-8

Eliot, T. S., Selected Essays (1932)

Emerson, Roger L., *Science and the Origins and Concerns of the Scottish Enlightenment* History of Science, xxvi (1988), 333-366

----------*Sir Robert Sibbald, Kt, the Royal Society of Scotland and the Origins of the Scottish Enlightenment* in Annals of Science, 45 (1988)

Fasti Aberdonenses: 1494-1854. Selections from the Records of the University of King's College Aberdeen (Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1854)

Fasti Academiae Mariscallanea Aberdonesis: Selections from the Records of the Marishal College and University 1593-1860 ed. by P. J. Anderson, 3 vols (New Spalding Club, Aberdeen, 1889)

Feder, L., Madness in Literature (Princeton, 1980)

Finlayson, C. P., *Two Highland Proteges of Dr Archibald Pitcairne*, Edinburgh Medical Journal LX, Series III, No. 3 (Edinburgh, 1953)

Force E. M., William Whiston: Honest Newtonian (Cambridge, 1985)

Foucault, M., Madness and Civilisation: a History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (Paris 1961, translated by Richard Howard, New York, 1965)

Fraser, William, Memorials of the House of Wemyss 3 volumes (Edinburgh, 1888)

Gagnebin, M. Bernard, *De La Cause De La Pesantur*, Notes and Records of the Royal Society, VI, (1949)

Gazette 8 (1933), 1-41

Gould, Robert Freke, The History of Freemasonry 4 volumes (Edinburgh, n.d.)

Green, John, B., John Wesley and William Law (1945) (8, f66)

Green, V. H. H., The Young Mr Wesley: A Study of John Wesley and Oxford (1961)

Greenwood, David, William King: Tory and Jacobite (Oxford, 1969)

Guerrini, A., *Newtonian Matter Theory, Chemistry, and Medicine, 1690-1714*, (unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Indiana University, 1983)

----------*James Keill, George Cheyne, and Newtonian Physiology, 1690-1740*, Journal of the History of Biology , 18, no. 12, (Summer, 1985), 247-66

----------*The Tory Newtonians: Gregory, Pitcairne and their Circle* Journal of British Studies 25 (July, 1986), 288-311

----------*Archibald Pitcairne and Newtonian Medicine* Medical History 31 (1987), pp. 70-83

Hall, Rupert, Philosophers at War (Cambridge, 1980)

Halsband, R., Lord Hervey: Eighteenth-Century Courtier (Oxford, 1973)

Halyburton, Thomas, Natural Religion Insufficient: and Reveal'd Necessary to Man's Salvation (1714)

Hannay, R. K., *The Visitation of the College of Edinburgh in 1690*, Book of the Old Edinburgh Club , viii,, 79-100

Harrison, John, The Library of Sir Isaac Newton (Cambridge, 1978)

----------The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism 1780-1850 (1979)

Henderson, G. D., *Religious Conditions in the North-East of Scotland After the Revolution* in Religious Life in Seventeenth-Century Scotland (Cambridge, 1937)

Henderson, G. D., Chevalier Ramsay (1952)

Hill, Christopher, The World Turned Upside Down (1972)

Hirst, Désirée, Hidden Riches: Traditional Symbolism from the Renaissance to Blake (1964)

The History of the University of Oxford general editor T. H. Aston, 5 volumes (Oxford, 1986)

Hobhouse, Stephen, Selected Mystical Writings of William Law (1938, revised 1948)

----------*'Fides et Ratio': the Book that Introduced Jacob Boehme to William Law* (Extracted from The Journal of Theological Studies) (1936)

Holmes, G. S., British Politics in the Age of Queen Anne (1967)

Howie, W. B., *Sir Archibald Stevenson, his ancestry, and the Riot in the College of Physicians at Edinburgh*, Medical History, II (1967), 269-284

Hoyles, John, The Waning of the Renaissance 1640-1740: Studies in the Poetry of Henry More, John Norris and Isaac Watts (The Hague, 1971)

----------The Edges of Augustanism: the Aesthetics of Spirituality in Thomas Ken, John Byrom and William Law (The Hague, 1972)

Hull, W. I., Benjamin Furly and Quakerism in Rotterdam, (Swarthmore College Monographs on Quaker History, No. 5, 1941)

Hume D., Letters of David Hume ed. by J. Y. T. Greig (Oxford, 1932)

Hurlbutt, R. H., Hume, Newton and the Design Argument (Nebraska, 1965)

Hurlbutt R. H., *David Hume and Scientific Theism*, Journal of the History of Ideas, xvii (1956), 486-96

Ilchester (Earl of), Lord Hervey and his Friends: 1726-38 (1950)

Ingham, Allan, Boswell's Creative Gloom: A Study of Imagery and Melancholy in the Writings of James Boswell (1982)

Innes-Smith, R. W., English Speaking Students of Medicine at the University of Leyden (Edinburgh and London, 1932)

Irving, David, The Lives of the Scottish Writers 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1839)

Ison, Walter, The Georgian Buildings of Bath: 1700-1830 (1948)

Jacobs, Margaret C., The Newtonians and the English Revolution 1689-1720 (Hassocks, 1976)

Jammer, Max, Concepts of Force: a Study in the Foundations of Dynamics (Cambridge, Mass., 1957)

Jones, Peter, *The Scottish Professoriate and the Polite Academy* in Wealth and Virtue ed. by Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff, (Cambridge, 1983)

Keill, John, Introductio ad Veram Physicam (1702)

Keith, Robert, History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland, ed. by J. P. Lawson (Spottiswoode Society, Edinburgh, 1884)

Kuhn, A. J., *Nature Spiritualized: Aspects of Anti-Newtonianism*, English Literary History 41 (1974), 400-412

King, Lester M., *George Cheyne, mirror of eighteenth century medicine*, Bulletin of the History of Medicine 48 (1974), 517-39

----------The Philosophy of Medicine, the Early Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, Mass., 1978)

Knox, R. A., Enthusiasm (1950)

Kordesch, Johanna Geyer, *Georg Stahl's Radical Pietist Medicine and its Influence of the German Enlightenment* The Medical Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century ed. by Andrew Wear and Roger French (Cambridge, 1990).

Korshin P. J., Typologies in England 1650-1820 (Princeton, 1982)

Koyré, A., Les Disciples Anglais De Jacob Boehme aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles (Paris, 1960)

Kubrin, D. C., *Providence and the Mechanical Philosophy: the Creation of the World in Newtonian Thought* (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell, 1968)

Kubrin, David, *Newton and the Cyclical Cosmos: providence and the mechanical Philosophy* Journal of the History of Ideas 28 (1967), pp 325-346

Kuhn see below 'Keith'

Lady Murray of Stanhope, Memoirs of the Lives of the Right Honourable George Baillie of Jerviswood and of Lady Grisell Baillie by their daughter... (Edinburgh, 1822)

Lamb, Jonathan, *The Fragmentation of Originals and 'Clarissa'* Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900 28 (Summer, 1988) 443-459

Lindenboom, G. A., *Pitcairne's Leyden Interlude Described from the Documents*, Annals of Science , 19 (1963), 273-284

Lockhart, George (of Carnwath), The Lockhart Papers, containing Memoirs and Commentaries upon the Affairs of Scotland from 1702 to 1715, 2 volumes (1817)

Lovejoy, A. O., The Great Chain of Being (Cambridge, Mass., 1936)

Luce, A., The Life of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne (1949)

Mack, Maynard, The Garden and the City: Retirement and Politics in the Later Poetry of Pope 1731-1743 (1969)

----------Alexander Pope: A Life (New Haven, 1985)

MacLaurin, Colin, The Collected Letters of Colin MacLaurin ed. by Stella Mills (Cheshire, 1982)

MacQueen, John, Enlightenment and Scottish Literature: Progress and Poetry i (Edinburgh, 1982)

Manuel, Frank E., Isaac Newton, Historian (Harvard, Cambridge Mass., 1963)

----------The Religion of Isaac Newton (1974)

Mariscallanae: Fasti Academicae 3 volumes (New Spalding Society, Aberdeen, 1897)

Mc.Quire J. E. and P.M. Rattansi, *Newton and the Pipes of Pan*, Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, 21 (1968)

McEwen, Alex R., Antoinette Bourignon, Quietist (1910)

Menzies, W., *Alexander Bayne of Rives, Advocate* Juridical Review, 36 (1924)

Metzger, Hélèn, Attraction Universelle et Religion Naturelle chez Quelques Commentatuers Anglais a Newton (Paris, 1938)

Moore, C. A., *The English Malady* Backgrounds of English Literature 1700-1760 (Minneapolis, 1953)

Moore J. and M. Silverthorne, *Gershom Carmichael and the Natural Jurisprudence Tradition in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, Wealth and Virtue ed. by Istvan Holt and Michael Ignatieff (Cambridge 1983)

Mossner, E. C., *Hume's Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot, 1734: the Biographical Significance*, Huntingdon Library Quarterly, VII, 2, (February, 1944)

Mullan, John, Sentiment and Sociability: the Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford, 1985)

Muses, Charles A., Illumination on Jacob Boehme: The Work of Dionysius Freher (NewYork, 1951)

Neale, R. S., Bath 1680-1850: A Social History or 'A Valley of Pleasure, yet a Den of Iniquity (1981)

Officers and Graduates of King's College Aberdeen ed. by P. J. Anderson (Aberdeen, 1893)

Oliver, W. H., Prophets and Millennialists: the Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s (Oxford, 1978)

Orcibal, J., *The Theological Originality of John Wesley and Continental Spirituality* in A History of the Methodist Chruch in Great Britain (Volume 1, 1965), 83-111

Ouston, Hugh, *York in Edinburgh, James VII and the Patronage of Learning in Scotland 1676-1688*, New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland , ed. by J. Dwyer, R. A. Mason, and A. Murdoch, (Edinburgh, 1982), 133-55

Overton, J. H., William Law: Non-juror and Mystic (1881)

Peel-Ritchie, Robert, The Early Days of the Royal Colledge of Physitians [sic] (Edinburgh, 1899)

Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society

Piozzi, Mrs, (see Thrale)

Pitcairn, Constance, The History of the Fife Pitcairns, (Edinburgh, 1905)

Pittock, Murray G. H., *Jacobitism in the North-East: the Pitsligo Papers in Aberdeen University library*, Aberdeen and the Enlightenment, ed. by J. J. Carter and J. H. Pittock (Aberdeen, 1986)

Plumb, J. H., Sir Robert Walpole: the King's Minister 2 volumes thus far (1956; 1960)

Popkin R. H. (editor), Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature1650-1800 (Clark Library Lectures 1981-1982) (Brill; Leiden, New York etc., 1988)

Porter, Roy, *The Rage of Party: A Glorious Revolution in English Psychiatry?* Medical History 29 (1983), 35-50 (7f34)

----------*Against the Spleen* Laurence Sterne: Riddles and Mysteries ed. by Valerie G. Myer (1984), 84-99

----------Mind Forg'd Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency (1987)

----------English Society in the Eighteenth Century (1982 revised 1990)

Price, J. V., David Hume (New York, 1968)

----------*The Reading Of Philosophical Literature* see I. Rivers (ed.) (1982).

Riley, P. W., The Union of England and Scotland: a Study in Anglo-Scottish Politics of the Eighteenth Century (Manchester, 1978)

Rivers, Isabel (editor), Books and Their readers in the Eighteenth-Century England (Leicester, 1982)

Rogal, Samuel J., John and Charles Wesley (Twayne English Authors, Boston, 1983)

Rousseau, G. S., *Science and the Discovery of the Imagination in Enlightenment England*, Eighteenth Century Studies 3, (Fall, 1969), 108-35

----------*Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres: Towards Defining the Origins of Sensibility*, Studies in the Eighteenth Century III ed. by R. F. Brissenden and J. C. Eade (Toronto, 1976), 137-157

----------*Science*, in The Context of English Literature: the Eighteenth Century ed. by Pat Rogers (1978), 153-207

----------*Psychology* in The Ferment of Knowledge ed. by G. S. Rousseau and R. Porter (Cambridge, 1980), 143-210

----------*Science Books and their Readers* in Books and their Readers in the Eighteenth-Century ed. by Isabel Rivers (Leicester, 1982)

----------*Mysticism and Millenarianism: "The Immortal Dr Cheyne"* in Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought 1650-1800 (Clark Library Lectures 1981-1982) ed. by R. Popkin (Brill; Leiden, New York etc., 1988), 81-126

Rudolph E. R., William Law (Boston, 1980)

Sale, William M., Samuel Richardson: Master Printer (Ithaca, New York, 1950)

Sambrook, James, James Thomson 1700-1748: a Life (Oxford, 1991)

Schnorrenberg, Barbara B., *Medical Men of Bath*, in Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture, 13, (1984). 189-203

Schofield, Robert E., Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in an Age of Reason (Princeton, 1978)

Schwartz, Hillel, Knaves, Fools, Madmen, and the Subtile Effluvium: a study of the Opposition to the French Prophets in England, 1706-1710., (Gainesville, 1978)

----------The French Prophets: the History of a Millenarian Group in Eighteenth-Century England, (U.C.L.A., Berkeley, 1980)

Screech M., Ecstasy and the Praise of Folly (1980)

Sekora, J., Luxury (Baltimore, 1977)

Sena, J. F., *The English Malady: The Idea of Melancholy from 1700 to 1760* (unpublished Princeton University Ph.D dissertation, 1967)

Shelley, Percy B., Shelley's Prose, ed. by D. L. Clark, (1988)

Shepherd Christine, *Arts Curriculum at Aberdeen* in Aberdeen and the Enlightenment , ed. by J. J. Carter and J. Pittock (Aberdeen, 1987)

Shirlaw, Leslie, *Dr Archibald Pitcairne and Sir Isaac Newton's "Black Years" (1692-4)*, The Chronicle of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, (1975), 23-6

Skene, George, 'An Account of a Journey to London etc.', in The Miscelleny of the Third Spalding Club III, (Aberdeen, 1940)

Smith, Ginnie, *'Prescribing the Rules of Health': Self Help and Advice in the Late Eighteenth Century* Patients and Practitioners ed. by Roy Porter (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 249-282

Speck, W. A., Tory and Whig 1701-1715 (1970)

Spillane, J. D., The Doctrine of Nerves (Oxford, 1981)

Stewart, Agnes M., The Academic Gregories (Edinburgh, 1901)

Stewert, Larry, *Samuel Clarke, Newtonianism, and the Factions of Post-revolutionary England* Journal of the History of Ideas XLI I (1981), 53-72

Struthers J., Historical Sketch of the Edinburgh Medical School (Edinburgh, 1867)

Symon, J. A., The Story of Ingliston, (Edinburgh, 1958)

Talon, Henri, (see Byrom, J.)

Tave, Stuart M., The Amiable Humorist: a Study in the Comic Theory and Criticism of the early Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries, (Chicago, 1960)

Thackeray, W. M., The History of Henry Esmond, 3 volumes (1852)

Thin, R., *Archibald Pitcairne 1652-1713*, Edinburgh Medical Journal , (July 1928), 368-382

Thorslev, P. L., Romantic Contraries: Freedom versus Destinty (New Haven,1984)

Thune, Nils, The Behmenists and the Philadelphians: a contribution to the Study of English Mysticism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Uppsala, 1948)

Todd, Janet, Sensibility: An Introduction (1986)

Tuveson, E., Millenium and Utopia: a study in the Background of the Idea of Progress (New York, 1964)

Tyerman, L. (Rev.), The Life of the Rev. George Whitfield 2 volumes (1876)

Viets, Henry R., *George Cheyne 1673-1743* Bulletin of the History of Medicine 23 (1949), 435-52

Walker, D. P., The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment, (1974)

Walton, William, Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of the Celebrated Divine and Philosopher, William Law comprising an elucidation of the Scope and Contents of the Writings of Jacob Böhme, and of his great commentator Dionysius Andreas Freher (privately printed for the author 1854) (NLS copy with copious authorial annotations)

Warrender, Lady Margaret, Marchmont and the Humes of Polwarth by one of their descendents (Edinburgh and London, 1894)

Wasserman, E. R., *The Divine Analogy in the Eighteenth Century* Journal of English Literary History, 20 (Baltimore, 1953), 39-76

Wear, Andrew and Roger French (editors) The Medical Revolution of the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge, 1989)

----------The Medical Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, 1990)

Westfall R. S., Science and Religion in Seventeenth-Century England (New Haven, 1957)

----------Never at Rest (Cambridge, 1980)

Whiteside, D. T., The Mathematical Papers of Isaac Newton 8 volumes (Cambridge, 1967-81)

Willey, Basil, The Eighteenth Century Background (1940)

Wiltshire, John Samuel Johnson in the Medical World: the Doctor and the Patient (Cambridge, 1991)

Wimsatt, W. K., Philosophic Words: A Study in the Style and Meaning in the *Rambler* and *Dictionary* of Samuel Johnson (Yale, 1968)

Winnett, A.R., Bishop Browne, Provost Bishop, Metaphysician (S.P.C.K., 1974)

Wordsworth, Christopher, Scholae Academicae: Some Account of the Studies at the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge, 1877)

Wormhoudt, Arthur, *Newton's Natural Philosophy in the Behmenist Works of William Law* Journal of the History of Ideas Volume 10, (1949), 411-429

Wright, J. P., *Metaphysics and Physiology: Mind, Body, and the Animal Economy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland*, Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, ed. by M. A. Stewart (Aberdeen, 1987), 251-301

Yates, Frances, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition (1964)

Zilboorg, G., History of Medical Psychology (New York, 1941)